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LADY JULIETTE'S SECRET.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Grand Court," "The Rose of Kemdale," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XIX.

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a colour and a light, As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.

At first Lady Juliette did not recognise the schoolmaster. She started backwards a little into the moonlight, and its soft radiance fell full upon her beautiful, anxious face; a curious, perplexed look was in the blue eyes, the fair brow was knitted into an expression of distrust and alarm. Fernandez was the first to speak.

"Have I the honour of awaiting the commands of Lady Juliette Cadette?"

Fernandez spoke in a soft voice, and bowed low with that courtly chivalry that was habitual to him.

"Oh, Mr. Fernandez," cried Lady Juliette, and there was a ring of reassurance in her voice.

Little did the earl's beautiful daughter imagine that she was the wedded wife of this young man in humble life, towards whom she entertained a gentle and kindly feeling it is true, but no sentiment even bordering upon the desperate and passionate adoration with which he regarded her. She had married a foreigner with a fair beard and thick flaxen hair, a man who, in her small knowledge of the world, in her ignorance of human life, and its tornado-like passions, she still imagined was a mere legal obstacle between her enemies and herself. With this man she had parted at the church door; he had gone on his way with his two hundred pounds; yet he was within call, so that she could summon him at any time if she desired a protector to stand between her and the odious Sir Guildford Owen. That man, that husband, was as nothing in her eyes; in her youthful ignorance she believed she was nothing in his. How should this handsome villager, with his nobly cast head and passionate dark eyes, be identified in any way with that person? Never was thought

farther from any human brain. And he, how shall we even attempt to portray his feelings—the love which glowed in his heart like a half-smothered volcano, the consciousness, at once bitter and burning, that he desperately loved his wife, that she was his wife, and that he was separated from her for ever, bound by every principle of manly honour that he should absent himself from her so long as they both should live?

"Is Mr. Clenham at home?" inquired Lady Juliette.

"He is expected every moment," responded Fernandez.

Juliette turned her head aside a little brusquely. She appeared to be lost in thought; then, tapping her small foot half-impatiently on the gravel path, she called aloud, "Finette, Finette," whereupon the garden gate swung back, and the Italian girl came lightly tripping to the side of her mistress.

"Mr. Clenham is out," said Juliette, speaking rapidly, "and we have no time to lose. Mr. Fernandez will tell us as well and as honestly as Mr. Clenham himself."

The heart of Fernandez leaped with joy on hearing Juliette speak of him thus kindly and confidently.

"Mr. Fernandez," she said. "You have heard of my flight from Maberly, and you must know something of its cause. An odious marriage was forced upon me, and I went away to avoid it. The person to whom they would have married me is, they say, shot dangerously in the head and in the chest; he trembles in the balance between life and death—this, at least, is the newspaper account—and I might reasonably conjecture that I no longer had anything to fear from the persecutions of this gentleman. But is this a true statement, or have I only been inveigled by a story? Tell me, I pray of you, for I would willingly return to the shelter of Maberly and to the protection of my guardian, so long as I have nothing to fear from the persecutions of Sir Guildford Owen."

"Sir Guildford Owen," replied Fernandez, "is

really seriously, I may say desperately wounded. It was I who discovered him lying senseless in Allonby Woods. It is the opinion of the doctors that, even should he recover, he will stoop from his chest for the remainder of his life. Then there is a wound in his head, and should inflammation of the brain set in, serious fears are entertained for his reason. There is no danger, I should say, Lady Juliette, that Sir Guildford would ever again persecute you with his addresses. You may safely return to Maberly."

"And so I will," cried Juliette, impulsively. "My guardian has always been kind to me, save only in this one respect. He inserted an advertisement in the Times, which I read this morning. It ran thus:

"Juliette. The danger which you dreaded is past. Return home at once; a warm welcome awaits you. Your childish impatience shall be forgiven." Finette and myself left our quiet lodgings, where we were living under assumed names, in the greatest seclusion, and hastened down to Allonby. But before presenting myself at the Abbey, I was determined to ask Mr. Clenham if the story were true—you would not betray me surely, would you?" she added, speaking as though a sudden thought had struck her. "I have no confidence in Mr. Upperton; he has such notions about obedience and disobedience, and the duty of children to their guardians, that he seems to forget the duties of guardians and elders towards the young and weak. But you surely have more generous ideas—you are a friend of Mr. Clenham's, he is nobleness itself—surely you would not betray me?"

She asked the question so simply, so suddenly, with such a childlike innocence and pathos, that the lover-husband yearned to fold her in his arms, to cast himself at her feet; as it was he lost some portion of his self-command, and answered, in a low and trembling voice:

"I would rather die a thousand deaths!"

Juliette started at the concentrated fervour of his tones. The pent-up volcano of his love was ready to burst forth into flaming words; but he restrained himself. Juliette went close to him and laid her small

white hand in his, it was the second time she had so condescended towards the young village school-master.

"Mr. Fernandez," she said, "I trust you. Good night."

Then she tripped lightly away, followed by Finette. "We have nothing to fear," cried the Italian girl. "All goes well. Ah, how I wish we had waited until this good robber shot the troublesome rich man in this way! Now you see your ladyship is forced to lead a single life, for you would have a greater repugnance towards your husband, with his fawn-coloured beard, his bushy flaxen hair, his slow, cold nature, and his common birth, than towards Sir Guildford himself. What a pity—that a pity that you can't marry!"

"I do not regret the step at all," replied Juliette, calmly. "I always wished to lead a single life, I value liberty more than any other gift under the sun. I only wish that I had more fortune, then I could do more good."

The two youthful female figures glided across the park in the moonbeams. Every now and then they paused, as a herd of deer went scampering by, for there were one or two dangerous ones among them which had been known to attack women and children. But they reached the terrace steps in safety; the large pond, with its yellow basin and fountain of Italian marble, glimmered in the moonlight; so did the white statues, and the largest vase where autumn shrubs and flowers were blooming. They went under the portico, and Finette rang the bell. Almost immediately the hall door was opened, and the young fugitive stood amid the blazing lights in the magnificent hall, surrounded by the pompously clad, bearded servants, who hailed their arrival with a low, respectful murmur of welcome. It was understood among the household that the beautiful young ward of the colonel had run away from Maberly solely to avoid a marriage that was odious to her, and the sympathies of the servants were all enlisted in her favour. Down the grand staircase came the light footsteps of Florence Random; she was singing an Italian waltz, at the very highest pitch of her soprano voice, she alighted in the hall, and made Juliette a low, sweeping courtesy.

"And so your little ladyship has thought fit to return," she cried, "after frightening us all to death, and getting talked about in the newspapers—though, to be sure, your name was not mentioned. But there were mysterious hints, which must have set all the gossip in the kingdom wondering. And so you thought there was no place like home, after all. I think you are wise, my dear. How in the world have they cooked for you since you have been away? How immensely uncomfortable you must have been! Nothing to eat, and nothing to wear. Come upstairs and make an elegant toilette—Finette will help you. There is such a chance for you, my dear. The eldest son of the Marquis of Crossby met with an accident yesterday. In returning from the races at Beesborough, he was thrown out of his carriage, and stunned. He recovered almost immediately, but as this was the nearest house, his friends brought him on here. He seems to like his quarters immensely, has been flirting desperately with me; he is very handsome, has thirty thousand a year, independent of his father, is fast and fashionable, and everything that is delightful; and now that poor Sir Guildford is out of the way, I am sure the colonel will have no objection to your making yourself charming and adorable in the eyes of this eligible young noble."

There was a recklessness about Florence which astonished Juliette. There was a wildness in her eyes, an hysterical sound in her mocking laughter, which had never been characteristic of the haughty, dashing belle. Juliette knew very little of the world, although she was wise with a wisdom beyond her years. Her knowledge was derived from books, rather than from men and women, and when she had heard Florence disclaim the possibility of her ever marrying, state that she desired to live a life of liberty, and declare that she had abandoned all thoughts of love and home ties, she had believed the young lady implicitly. She was surprised, then, to see this unwonted disturbance of the ordinary self-command and serenity that had distinguished Miss Random. Her heart was not in her words. It was easy enough even for Juliette to see that Florence was not in the least interested in this handsome Lord Linden, despite his thirty thousand a year and his fast and fashionable manners.

Lady Juliette went to her room, and Finette assisted her to dress. She wore a black satin, with an over-skirt of rose-coloured silk. This suited well with the pale, statuesque style of her beauty. One crimson rose she wore in her dark hair, but no jewels glittered on her white throat or arms.

She was received by her guardian and Mrs. Philbertson with a kindly and polite welcome; not a word was spoken in allusion to her strange flight.

The rules of good breeding were strictly attended to at Maberly Abbey. The well-ordered household held its peace. Lady Juliette had gone away, Lady Juliette had returned. No matter for comment was found in either circumstance; or rather, if anybody talked about it, they had sense enough not to talk too loudly; no echoes of gossip or scandal reached the ears of the placid Mrs. Philbertson or the proud and pompous colonel.

It was difficult for Juliette to realise, as she sat at the luxurious and elegant table of her guardian, waited upon by servitors gorgeously arrayed in all the pomp of purple and gold lace, while hothouse flowers, golden plate, dainty dishes, sparkling wines, all the accompaniments of the stately feast, testified to the splendour and luxury of the owner of the mansion—it was difficult, we say, for Juliette to realise that she had been living for the last three weeks in cheap and simple lodgings, possessing no further charm than their cleanliness, their quietness, and their obscurity. It was difficult for Juliette to believe, while she sat side by side with Lord Linden, receiving his marked attentions—which were smiled upon by her guardian, and tacitly encouraged by her guardian's wife—that she had for ever placed herself beyond the pale of any possible marriage, that she had contracted a terrible *malice*, that she was the possessor of a secret which all her world would consider fearful did they know of it—Lady Juliette's secret!

Here she was—burdened with it for life! She had thought to spend all her years in obscurity, and under a false name; but now the necessity for that was past. Sir Guildford (so his physicians said) would never be in a position to enforce his claims to her hand; she had nothing more to dread from him. And here she was, burdened with a mystery—weighed down by a secret! She must sit and smile, as though nothing were the matter; nay, she must try to forget it.

"And it will be no hard task," said the young beauty to herself, "for I have made up my mind never to love any one exclusively; I shall lead quite a different life; I shall strive to love everybody, and do good to all."

In this philanthropic mood Lady Juliette was content to remain, for the present.

Lord Linden was a remarkably handsome man, an inveterate pleasure-seeker, and an enthusiastic admirer of female loveliness; he was fields as the wind, careless, extravagant, but an enormous favourite with the ladies—a prize coveted by Belgianian mothers, and sighed for in secret by many a fair and titled maiden; he stood six feet high without his shoes, his complexion was fair and beautiful, his early auburn hair was the subject of much animated and warmly expressed admiration. It would really not be too much to say—using the words in a conventional sense—that Lord Linden was adored in the Mayfair circles, his worshippers, be it understood, being all of the fairer sex.

When dinner was over, Mrs. Philbertson led the way into the drawing-room. Once there, Florence sank upon an ottoman, and clapped her hands.

"The prim little nun is changing her character," she cried. "My dear Mrs. Philbertson, did you notice how abominably our Juliette flirted with the heir to the Marquisate of Crossby? Now what would she say to me if I were to let his lordship know the nice dance her little ladyship has been leading us for the last three weeks? How do we know where she has been living in London? I am sure it would spoil her chance of coming in, some day, for those great Yorkshire estates, worth four hundred thousand a year, if my lord knew all. How calm you look, Juliette; why, she does not even colour. Poets and sentimentalists, now, would speak of the divine repose expressed on that beautiful little face. But I consider it a species of brazen impudence to be able to take one's place again in the family circle, as though nothing was the matter—absolutely, as though nothing was the matter!"

Here Florence began to sing:

"Then up and down the house he went, arranging dish and platter,

With a dull and heavy countenance, as if nothing were the matter."

"I trust, Florence," said Mrs. Philbertson, speaking in her calm, passionless tones, "that you have no intention of disgracing Juliette, and of requiting the kindness and hospitality which it has always been our wish to show towards you, by disclosing the family secret which circumstances have, unhappily, left at the mercy of your discretion."

"Dear me, what a nice speech!" cried Florence. "I wish I could talk so wisely, so calmly, and so well; however do you manage it, Mrs. Philbertson? and you have taught Juliette just the same. She always speaks so calmly; if she puts on a rose-colour upper skirt, or twines a flower into her hair, it is done with a sort of sanctified meaning. Even if she runs away for three weeks, and nobody knows,

meanwhile, where she is, she just comes back again, looking more like a young nun than ever, and takes her place at the dinner table by the side of my young Lord Linden, and wins his heart."

A reckless light shone in the eyes of Florence, with all and through all her chattering nonsense, there was a ring of disappointment, a tinge of anxiety, a look half angry, half sad.

Mrs. Philbertson, who was a very literal lady, and who could never be made to understand a joke, returned to the charge once more, and seriously begged of Florence not to expose the secret of Juliette's flight.

"Of course, Miss Random, if we hear that anything has been said, we shall understand quite well that it is you who have spread the news of Lady Juliette's most imprudent conduct."

"In which case, you know," said Florence, "you can forbid me the house, and speak a bad word for me everywhere in society. Society will be so glad to hear it; society always is if it be anything bad. Seriously, though, Mrs. Philbertson, I am not going to spoil Juliette's chance in life. I shall hold my tongue about her imprudent flight to London. I wonder now very much whether Linden would be disinterested enough to marry her, considering that, with all her beauty, she has nothing but her hundred a year, hardly enough to keep her in clothes. I have studied these great *parties* very much, my dear, and they are the most selfish creatures in the world, they scarcely ever fall victims to their young affections, not once in five hundred times; and he would not marry Juliette for the sake of her family, for his own is as good, if not better. I know what these Crossbys are; in spite of their wealth, they are the greediest folks in existence. Depend upon it, he and his family are looking out for some colossal fortune to join with his own. I really do not think Juliette would have the shadow of a chance, between you and me and the post, if you will forgive my using slang."

Florence had all the talk to herself. Juliette was once or twice upon the point of stating, in her calm, innocent fashion, that it was not her intention ever to marry; but she restrained herself, thinking wisely there was time enough for her to express her determination on that head after she should have received two or three offers.

Just at this juncture the gentlemen came in, and Lord Linden at once approached Lady Juliette, and took up his place at her side. His lordship had been accustomed to universal adulation ever since he came of age, some four years before, and there was something in the calm and serious manner of Juliette which piqued his curiosity, excited his admiration, and altogether fascinated him for a time. He had flirted with Florence all the morning, and he now transferred his attentions to Juliette, without a moment's consideration, or one single pang of compunction. Such a thought never once entered his handsome head, with its splendid covering of curly, auburn hair. He asked Juliette to play, and she played; he asked her to sing, and she sang; he paid her extravagant compliments, and she neither smiled nor blushed, looked neither displeased nor gratified.

This strange young girl, who had undertaken to live in the world as though not of it, who believed that she had counted the cost when she made the great sacrifice of uniting herself to a person whom she hoped and expected never to see again, was in reality, at this period of her life, raised completely above all earthly passions and hopes.

Lord Linden's beauty, Lord Linden's family, Lord Linden's title, Lord Linden's enormous wealth, were all as so many worthless baubles in her eyes. She may have felt a little regret that she had been so precipitate, that she had not waited a few weeks longer; but how was she to know that Sir Guildford Owen was coming to such serious grief? It was impossible that she could have; she was no prophetess. She had made her own bed, and she must lie upon it; she must carry her strange secret about with her as long as she lived, and go down to her grave with it still unrevealed. She had every faith in Finette.

CHAPTER XX.

Fear not thou to loose thy tongue;

Set thy hoary fancies free;

What is loathsome to the young

Savours well to thee and me.

Tenney.

ALL the household of Maberly had retired to their rooms for the night. The sick man slept an uneasy sleep, watched over by his nurses and attendants—as yet Sir Guildford had not recovered consciousness; Mrs. Philbertson lay buried in the profoundest of slumbers; Juliette, closeted with Finette, discoursed on the past events, and discussed as to the best method of keeping the strange secret a secret for ever; Lord Linden, who had drunk a good deal of wine, lay in a feverish sleep under his silken canopy, dreaming dreams in which Juliette and Flo-

rence alternately figured, sometimes as witches of the Brocken, sometimes as fairies riding in the air in golden chariots drawn by white swans.

But there were two in that household who held fierce parley in a large and handsome sleeping-chamber, appropriated on occasions to the colonel's own use. It was a chilly autumn evening, and a fire burned in the grate. Two men stood by the high carved mantel-shelf. One was the colonel, the other was Mapleton. The latter looked as fierce as a tiger just escaped from a jungle, and eager for its prey; his teeth were clenched, his eyes glistened, his very moustache seemed to bristle with rage. The colonel slightly bent his haughty head, there was a pallor about his lips, he spoke passionately, yet there was a concentrated and stealthy fear expressed in every motion of his frame, in every tone of his voice.

"Have I not done enough for you?" he said. "Have I not settled a large income on you? Are you not comparatively a rich man? Is not my house, with all its luxuries and comforts, open to you? Do I not introduce you to all my gay friends? Have I not promised in the London season to look out for you a rich bride? What more can I do for you?"

"I do not covet a rich bride," responded Mapleton, curling his moustached lip yet more bitterly. "If yonder cold, scornful tigress, Florence Random, had not a second dress, nay, were she clothed in rags and shoeless, I should still covet her above all others. You remember me of old, Richard, you remember when I was the most dashing dragoon in my regiment, you remember that I never spared man in my wrath, or woman in my—love. Money I sought, it is true, but only as a means to an end. Since those days I have worn a convict's chain, I have smarted under the lash of the jailer—since that I have wandered barefoot, begging my bread from door to door; that was while you were on the Continent, and had not this war driven you home I might have been so wandering still; but, notwithstanding all that is passed, my nature remains the same. I have set my heart on winning and wedding this Florence Random. The more she hates me, the more she fascinates me. Unless you help me, I don't care if I betray you, if I let all the world know the share you had in the death of the Earl of—"

"Hold! hold! The share I took?" cried the colonel; "when you, you—it was your murderous hand that drove the knife into his trusting heart!"

"And where were you?" growled the other. "Did not you stand by—wine and turn pale, but still stand by? And who helped to bury the dead? and who seized upon the spoil? and who came back and fattened upon it? I—I was supposed to have been shot through the heart by Greek brigands three years before that. You knew the life I had been leading; that I was one of those brigands. I had been mourned for as dead by my father and mother. Afterwards I came back to England, and was engaged in a bold burglary—a desperate attack on a ducal house. I was taken with the sparkling spoil—rubies, emeralds, and diamonds, crowding in my pockets like sugar-plums in those of the school-boy. Besides all this I had shot a man-servant nearly to the death; so I was sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude. I served under the name of Jonas Stock. You alone of all the world knew that my real name was Robert Philbertson; that I was the youngest of three brothers, the eldest of whom was then ruling in state at Maberly Abbey. He had been always steady, respectable, and rich. The second, a most gallant gentleman—spotless, save for one dark stain on his conscience—was serving with his regiment in India—that was you, gallant Richard. So you passed your time among your palanquins, your brother officers—your gay, varied soldier's life had doubtless its charms for you; while I was handed over to my overseer, my whip, my chains, my misery. The owner of Maberly died childless, and behold the gallant colonel returns to the enjoyment of his fortune. But, meanwhile, what of the convict—the wretched younger brother? He served out his time; he suffered his punishment to the bitter end. He came back again, and his brother received him kindly, because he is obliged to; he would be afraid to do otherwise. He gives him some thousands of pounds, he gives him a home in his house; and all might now go well and peacefully but for two disturbing elements in the shape of women. Here, first of all, is Sir Guildford Owen, to whom accident revealed the secret in bygone days. He will tell everything unless this wayward girl, daughter of a great house, as he supposes, will consent to marry him. She runs away; he is desperately enraged, thinks that you are in the plot, and threatens exposure and ruin. If I had not shot him down the other day, what would have become of us all? And yet you were inclined to blame me for that! Would that I had done it more effectually! And now here is another difficulty—one that you tell me is of my own raising. I am resolved to marry this Florence

Random; so fully resolved that I don't care what steps I take to achieve my ends. I will have you arraigned for the murder of the earl. You may say that I am myself implicated in it. Nay, but you do not know how many tricks I have learnt; how I can double and turn, elude justice, throw the blame on you, and escape with the spoil. I have done it before."

The colonel was beside himself with rage.

"You are either an idiot, a madman, or a drunkard," said he.

"I may be all three," returned Mapleton. "I do not care what lengths I go to, or if I harass you to death in my pursuit of this woman, whom I am resolved to marry, no matter what it costs me, no matter if it ruins me—you—all of us!"

"And how on earth am I to force the woman to marry you?" demanded the colonel.

And this time the self-possessed and courtly gentleman so far lost his self-possession that he actually uttered a tremendous oath.

Then Mapleton laughed the laugh of a fiend; he delighted in evil, as flowers delight in the sunshine, as good men rejoice in good deeds, as the thirsty earth rejoices in genial showers.

"Will you help me?" he asked. "Let us not quarrel any more; but answer, will you help me? Persuade this woman, whom I desire to marry, that I have a vast fortune, and that I belong to a grand family; nay, that I am heir to a great title, which has become extinct, but for which I am striving. Romance, tell her everything that is false. You can do that. Don't pretend to be better than you are, my gallant brother. The highly moral dodge won't pass with me, and I think you ought to know that by this time. I am not joking; I am quite in earnest. Now, will you do all you can to persuade this proud woman to marry me? Why, positively, she has so insulted me that I have sworn to gain her, if it is only to wreak my vengeance upon her!"

"I will do what I can," said the colonel, gloomily, "but Florence is quite as obstinate as you are, and if she has made up her mind not to have you, she would not marry you if you were the heir to a dukedom."

"Then I'll carry her off," cried Mapleton, with a frightful oath; "and you must help me; give me your hand upon it."

The colonel gave his hand, though slowly and reluctantly, as it seemed. After this the two drank deeply of wine, and smoked on, far into the night.

The well-ordered household arose bright and cheerful as the autumn morning which glowed and glimmered on the golden woods.

Everybody rejoiced that Juliette had returned. She was a general favourite with high and low.

Colonel Philbertson, whatever might have been the dark secrets of his stormy youth, whatever the faults of his maturer age, was a man who by nature hated what was evil, even while he committed it. He entertained for Juliette a certain affection and respect; he could not help exulting that she had escaped the bitter fate of marrying a man whom she thoroughly disliked; he was glad that she was back again, under his roof; he knew nothing of the wild step she had taken, and he resolved now to set about, honestly, and seek for her a suitable husband—youthful and gifted as herself, gentle, well born, brave, and loveable. So far as he could judge, Lord Linden came up to all these requirements. Lord Linden seemed struck with Juliette, why should she not marry him? So he resolved to try and bring it about.

These were the thoughts that occupied the colonel, while he lounged in his dressing-gown, on the morning after the conversation with his villainous brother. He partook of chocolate in his room, and matured his plans.

Mrs. Philbertson dozed on peacefully, as was her wont.

Juliette was so fatigued by her journey from London that she did not rise early on this morning, but Florence was up and stirring before eight o'clock. She wore the coolest, the airiest, and yet the most modest of costumes. A dress of white muslin with a pattern of ivy leaves, a large straw hat trimmed with green satin ribbon, green satin ruchings and trimmings to her dress. Her golden hair was arranged with exquisite taste. She tripped lightly across the park; no fear of Mapleton troubled her equanimity. She left the park, skirted the wood, and soon entered the village of Allonby; she made straight for Honeyuckle Cottage.

Proud, imperious, worldly belle, and heartless coquette, what led her so frequently into the presence of the Allonby schoolmaster? She opened the gate, tripped up the gravel path, and knocked at the door—the door, we must premise, stood open.

It was a lovely autumn morning; stocks and geraniums and balsams were all aglow; bees were

dipping in and out of the flower-cups. The little brass knocker on the door shone as brightly as though it had been made of gold; the flags of the passage were whitened to perfection, and everything looked resplendent with the beauty of cleanliness.

The landlady came forward, and in answer to Miss Random's inquiry as to whether Mr. Fernandez was in the house or not, she exclaimed:

"Oh, yes, miss, he is at his breakfast; please to walk in."

Florence walked in. Fernandez was gloomily stirring his coffee. He flushed to the roots of his hair at the sight of Miss Random; it was the first sign of emotion he had ever manifested in the presence of Florence. How was it that her heart stirred so strangely within her, that she turned first red and then pale, and could scarcely speak? Soon, however, she recovered herself. The young man bowed, and placed a chair for her with a courtly grace.

"Mr. Fernandez," said Florence, "Lady Juliette has returned, much to the delight of everybody. I wish now to resume my Spanish lessons which have been interrupted by her absence. Will you come this afternoon at five o'clock, as usual? And what about the payment? Do I not owe you some money for the lessons already given?"

The elegant purse of silver chain-work was in the hands of Florence, and several gold pieces glittered through the meshes. With much hesitation, the money was paid on the one side and received on the other.

Florence was desperately annoyed to find herself blushing furiously, and almost apologising to the humble young man for offering him money. How was it? What was it? She told herself that she detested him. What did she care about Spanish lessons as Spanish lessons? Was some spell cast over her, or was she going mad? A sort of feverish eagerness possessed her, a desire to break the fetters which, unconsciously to herself, seemed to have chained down her reason, scattered her most cherished theories to the winds—nay, even upset her future life plans, for she had found herself lately sketching an impossible future, and dreaming impossible dreams. Florence was proud, ambitious, untamed—a thorough lover of liberty, a strong nature, at once independent, self-reliant, and exacting. And here she was, crouching and colouring, afraid to pay this man for the lessons she had taken from him, feeling timid and abashed as a school-girl of fifteen, loth to leave him, yet angry with him.

With a mighty effort, she resolved to fling off this poisonous and subtle fascination. She would speak to him as Miss Random, the cousin of half-a-dozen earls. She would make him know that she understood his position as the humble village schoolmaster.

"I did not come here solely, Mr. Fernandez, on account of Spanish lessons," said Florence, speaking suddenly in a hard, cold voice. "But I am sorry to say that I have heard your name ill-naturedly mixed up with this sad robbery and intended murder of Sir Guildford Owen. Your praiseworthy efforts for his preservation have been misconstrued, and I have heard very base suspicions cast upon you. You see you have your bread to earn, and when you leave here you must look out for another situation. If there be any aspersion cast on your character it may ruin you for life, whereas, if you continue honest and industrious you may hope one day to obtain a very respectable position; you might even go into trade as a bookseller, or you might become a private tutor in a family, and I cannot help feeling a certain degree of interest in you as I should in any one connected with my friends at Maberly. I advise you, therefore, to look out carefully for witnesses in your own favour. I think you should be ready at any time to defend yourself. You may have enemies; at least there may be many who would be interested in your ruin." She paused, for she had spoken without due consideration. She felt that she had made, for her, the clever and witty Florence Random, a somewhat incoherent and foolish speech. What might not this cynical and self-possessed young man think of her? It was just possible that he might guess at the disturbed state of her feelings; if so, she felt, in her pride and passionate mortification, that she could almost kill herself.

Fernandez was looking on the ground gravely and silently, there was neither mockery nor triumph in his face. Could Florence have read his heart, she would have seen that he knew nothing of her pride, her condescension, her agitation; for him she was a mere abstract fine lady, or visitor at Maberly, who was pleased to patronise him since she had nothing else to do. His thoughts were busied with Juliette—Juliette whom he adored so madly and so hopelessly. What would she think if she heard these aspersions cast upon him? As regarded the opinions of the rest of the world the young schoolmaster was callously indifferent.

"I should think, madam," he said, suddenly coming out of his reverie, "that the true perpetrator of this deed will be discovered before very long."

"Did you not bite his hand?" inquired Florence, speaking now with great excitement.

"Yes," returned the young man, raising his eyes inquisitively to meet those of Miss Random.

"What part of his hand did you bite?" demanded Florence, breathlessly.

"The fleshy part of the thumb of the left hand," responded Fernandez.

"Could you swear to the man if you saw him again?"

"Anywhere," answered the schoolmaster.

"And through any disguise?"

"Through any disguise. I have seen disguised brigands in foreign cities—men who have stopped my father's travelling carriage on the wild mountains, and have politely demanded our money and watches. The same men I have seen enter theatres a few weeks afterwards, dressed in the very height of the fashion. My eyes have penetrated their disguise completely. I have found it wiser to maintain silence; but I have known all."

"Come up to-night to Maberly to give me a Spanish lesson," said Florence; "and I believe I can show you the man who attempted the life of Sir Guildford."

The eyes of Fernandez widened and brightened in intense surprise. He looked supremely handsome at that moment; his splendid face was all aglow with excitement.

"At Maberly?" he said, "at Maberly—a murderer's thief at Maberly? Then you are not safe—your lives are in jeopardy!"

He thought of Juliette, and the pallor upon his face quite alarmed Miss Random. Instantly she fancied (so blind is human nature) that it was upon her account he looked so pale and so distressed.

"Do not fear for us," she said, speaking quite tenderly.

She offered him her hand, and then walked out of the house.

The gay belle nursed a great delusion—one that set her blood tingling, and her heart beating. How was this strangest of strange stories to end?

(To be continued.)

MONTROSE;

OR,

THE RED KNIGHT.

CHAPTER XVII.

Hail to thy pile! more honoured in thy fall
Than modern mansions in their pillar'd state.

Byron.

THE attendants upon Jasper St. Julien, calling the old servants of Montrose to their aid, ransacked the castle for wine and provisions, and when the repast had been spread in the great hall, the chief was summoned to preside. He approached the ladies, and informed them that they were to accompany him.

"Spare us," pleaded the countess. "We cannot eat. Let us remain here."

"Not so, my fair birds of passage," returned Sir Jasper, with a wicked leer. "If you do not honour our board, you must keep us company; for I have sworn that you go not from my sight again until I have a wife! Fear not, if you obey me. How now, pretty one? Thou art not so past as thou wert at my castle of Buchala. By my faith, I'll find a husband for thee among my stout soldiers. Think not that all the good is reserved for thy mistress."

This last was addressed to Margaret Ramsey, and he patted her upon the cheek as she moved past him. Her eyes flashed, and her cheeks burned; but she made no reply in words.

"Heavens!" groaned Douglas, after St. Julien had gone, and he and the esquire were left with the guard which had been detailed to watch them, "what can we do?"

"We can do nothing but wait and trust in Providence," returned Bertram.

"But this is dreadful! My heart will burst!"

"And yet I have hope, Sir Robert. Not until I see the end will I despair."

"Hope, Bertram?"

"Yes."

"And in what? Whence comes it? Who can help us now?"

"My hope is in the Red Knight. Knowledge of this assault must reach him sooner or later; and when he knows it, he will come to our aid."

At this point the guard, observing that the prisoners were conversing, approached and separated them.

In time St. Julien came forth from the banquetting-hall, and his prisoners were conducted into the outer court. As Douglas passed out he observed that large heaps of straw, and other combustible mate-

rials, had been gathered in different places; and when he reached the court he saw that the same thing had been done in the stables, and in the soldiers' quarters.

"Will you burn the castle?" he asked, in surprise.

"Not I," answered St. Julien. "Marouf takes command here when I am gone."

"And the women and children of Lystra who are within the walls?"

"The noble emir will care for them. If they are quiet and reasonable, no harm will come to them. But this castle must be destroyed. The Saracens, whose rightful heritage this valley is, will no longer permit the Christian stronghold to stand in their way."

Thus speaking, Sir Jasper turned to his officers, and gave directions to prepare for the start, and by watching and listening our hero discovered how matters had been arranged between the recreant knight and the emir. Marouf was to remain, with his Saracen force, in possession of the domain of Lystra, while St. Julien was to draw off his Frankish host, and bear away as his prisoners the household of Montrose.

It was an hour past noon when St. Julien's force was ready to move. In advance were twenty mounted men-at-arms, led by a lieutenant; then came the knight himself, with the countess riding on one side, and Isabel upon the other, both securely lashed to their saddles, Margaret being immediately behind them, under charge of a stout archer. Next rode Douglas and Bertram, also bound in their seats, with their arms still pinioned, and guarded by ten mounted soldiers. The rear was brought up by sixty stout archers on foot, who, under the influence of the wine they had drunk, stepped off with more alacrity than order.

As the cavalcade passed out, the swart Moslems were gathered upon either hand to bid them adieu, and hardly had they crossed the drawbridge, when a sharp, crackling noise caused the countess and her daughter to look behind them; and they saw, from door-ways and loop-holes, from tower and bartizan, dense volumes of smoke bursting forth, with here and there sharp tongues of flame leaping out. They saw the women and children gathered upon the hill-side; and they saw the busy Moslems bearing away the arms and munitions of war.

The place which had been their home so long was to be their home no more; and thus the last foothold of the Christians in Lystra was being swept away! At that moment the same thought occupied the minds of both mother and child. It was a thought of the earlier, fairer home—the home of England—their native land! Should they ever behold its sweet hills and vales again?

Isabel rode on with an aching, sinking heart, ever and anon looking back upon the blazing pile, the flames now bursting forth from foundation to pinnacle, the dense smoke rolling up the mountain-side in great volumes, while the snapping cinders, caught in the erratic eddies, were whirled in all directions, some of them falling even in the path over which the prisoners rode.

"My sweet Isabel," said St. Julien, as they pursued their way over the level ground south of the town, "I have been forced to some very hard work, but your present companionship makes ample amends."

The maiden looked up into the knight's evil face, but made no reply.

"Tell me, pretty one—did you think, when you went away from me so unceremoniously, that I should suffer you to remain away? Did you think I could live without you?"

"Sir Jasper, why do you torture me thus?"

"Torture you, lady?"

"Ay. Your words are but the utterance of a scoff and a railer. I know my fate; do not make it blacker than it is."

"Tush! Does it displease thee to hear words of love?"

"From thy lips—yes."

"No, no! But from the lips of Robert Douglas they would steal like drops of honey, eh?"

Isabel's cheeks flushed, and then grew pale; a painful groan was her only answer.

"Look ye, my fair one," pursued Sir Jasper, in a hot, hissing tone, "I have that in store for you of which you do not dream. Oh! I will have your love fast enough! I owe Robert Douglas a debt which shall be paid according as thou shalt dictate. Upon the curling of thy lip to me in scorn, Douglas dies! Ha! it moves thee, I see! I know thy foolish love, girl; and I tell thee frankly, I will not brook its continuance. When we have reached my castle of Buchala, where the priest awaits us, thou wilt immediately become my wife; and if, thereafter, thou givest one sign of love for another, that other dies. I shall hold the youth as a hostage for your seemly behaviour as a true spouse."

Shuddering, and trembling at every joint, Isabel bowed her head, and for a time the great wreck of her hopes whelmed her with an agony so intense that the very cords of her life seemed rent and sundered.

Towards the close of the day the column reached, small sandy plain, shut in on three sides by tall palms, while upon the fourth ran a shallow stream of water, with abrupt hills beyond. Here St. Julien gave the order for a brief halt, that the horses might drink, and the foot soldiers rest.

"I trust, dear lady," said Sir Jasper, addressing the countess, "that your courage is good. We shall reach Buchala ere the night is far advanced."

"Take no thought of me, sir. I am prepared for the worst."

"You do me wrong, lady. By my life, I mean that both you and your fair daughter shall find the best rather than the worst."

"Hark!"

It was the knights' lieutenant who thus exclaimed.

And at the same moment St. Julien heard a sound, as of the tramp of horses, to the northward, upon the road over which they had come.

"Sdeath! what can this be? Marouf must have sent messengers after me. But wherefore?"

"It were well to be prepared," suggested the lieutenant.

"Ay—thou art right. Be it friend or foe, we will give them fitting reception."

And as speedily as possible Sir Jasper called his force out upon the plain, and drew them up in battle array—his horsemen in the centre, with the archers upon either flank, the prisoners being left by the stream, under a sufficient guard.

Nearer and nearer came the tramp, and ere long a single horseman came into view from beyond the line of palms. He was a knight, clad in bright steel armour, and his visor was down. When he saw St. Julien's force he halted, and waved his hand to some one behind him; and presently afterwards another horse bounded into view—a powerful charger, superbly caparisoned—bearing upon his back the warlike, stalwart form of the Red Knight of St. John. And anon the clang and the tramp increased, as other knights rode forth from the wood, until at length four-and-twenty steel-clad warriors, each bearing upon his lance-head the knightly pennon, were drawn up on the northern confine of the plain. The Red Knight swept his gaze over the scene before him, and when he had seen the prisoners by the brook, and had counted their number, he advanced, and hailed the recreant chief.

"Jasper St. Julien, thou art a false and perjured knight, and a curse upon the earth! Cough thy lance, or die like a dog! Thine hour hath come!"

Thus speaking the Red Knight spurred forward; and St. Julien, with an oath, seeing that the meeting was inevitable, rushed forth. But if he had thought to maintain himself against the mystic warrior, he had thought in vain. He was hurled from his seat, and borne backward upon the ground, and in a moment more his antagonist had alighted, and bent over him.

"Jasper St. Julien, if thou wouldst know who it is that thus assumes to render justice, look!"

The mystic knight bent lower down, and raised his visor.

A shuddering, fearful cry burst forth from St. Julien's lips, as cries one who beholds an avenging spectre; and on the next instant his voice was hushed for ever. A single stroke of the avenger's ponderous sword had sent his head rolling upon the sand.

And then, as the steel-clad host, with lances couched, prepared to charge in a body, the forces of Buchala broke and fled like frightened sheep. They had seen their leader go down, and they cared not to await the onset of a power which they knew would whelm them as sure as it came. They were soon out of sight, beyond the line of woods to the south, and the new-comers did not care to pursue.

(To be continued.)

THE LOSSES OF THE WAR.—The conflicts of the present war have far exceeded general expectation with regard to their sanguinary character. The following list of losses in killed, wounded, disappeared, and prisoners of the French and German armies, is rather under-estimated:—August 4th, Wissembourg, 10,000; August 6th, Worth, 25,000; August 6th, Forbach, 30,000; August 14th, Borny, 20,000; August 16th, Doncourt, 30,000; August 18th, Rezonville, 35,000. Total, 150,000. The losses in killed and wounded have been about equally divided between the opposing forces; if anything the balance is against the Prussians. On the other hand, the French have made very few captives, whilst the Germans had taken 10,000 prisoners previous to the capitulation of Sedan and Laon.



[THE PRINCESS AND HER ATTENDANTS.]

THE DIAMOND MERCHANT.

CHAPTER I.

Despair is in the father's tear,
Deep anguish in his eye;
The dreaded words have met his ear,
His "only one" must "die." *Eliza Cook.*

THE date of our story is in the fourteenth century, in the reign and empire of Charles IV., Emperor of Germany and King of Bohemia. We begin it at the Castle of Zurichbold, the seat of the princes of the house of Altenburg, as we shall style the family in this romance.

The sun had not quite set, and Eustace, Prince of Zurichbold, was pacing to and fro in the great baronial hall—a man of noble presence, scarcely thirty years of age, and yet with threads of silver in his raven black hair.

A gentleman in black velvet, white-haired, grave in feature, step, and speech, enters the hall, and moves towards the prince, who turns to meet him.

"The surgeon at last! He comes to speak of my wife. Is she dead?—I read death in his face," thought the prince as they neared each other; and, unable to take another step, he halted. He folded his arms across his chest, and stood like a statue of marble.

"My lord," said the castle surgeon, "we must speak privately."

"My wife? Speak! She is dead?" almost gasped the prince, trembling violently, and yielding mechanically to the pressure of the surgeon's hand.

"Oh, no! She may survive all of us many years." "For that thank Heaven!" murmured the prince, as they entered a small apartment, the heavy, massive stone door of which was unlocked by the surgeon.

In this apartment were kept all the title-deeds, vouchers, receipts, legal and financial writings of the great principality; hence its descriptive name—The Parchment Room.

"Now, Sir David, speak. We are alone. Why this strange proceeding? My retainers are as eager as I am to hear of the welfare of the princess."

"My lord, ere to-morrow morning that which at present is known only to me and the two faithful attendants of the princess will be known to all in the domain of Zurichbold."

"Well, well? you speak so slowly, Sir David."

"The matter is very grave, my lord. A child has, within two hours, been born to inherit the great estates of Zurichbold."

"But the princess?"

"Has passed into a delirium."

"Great Heaven! I must see her instantly!" exclaimed the prince, rushing towards the door.

But the hand of the surgeon, strong and elastic as some of his own glittering scalpels, seized the wrist of the prince, and held him back, while he said, with rapid speech:

"I made her delirious! I! to save her life! to save her from going mad!"

All the gravity and sedateness vanished from the face of the surgeon as he uttered the remarkable words.

The prince, paralysed for an instant by a fear of something terrible, by a dread of he knew not what, sank down into a chair, leaned his head upon a table near, and groaned:

"My wife! my beloved wife!—poor Agnes!"

"Patience," said the surgeon, soothingly. "A child is born to your house—a daughter."

"I would that it had been a son; but the will of Heaven be done!" replied the prince, raising his head. "Well, at least a child, a daughter, is born to my house, and the curse hurled at my head, on my wedding day, more than ten years ago, is at an end."

"Heaven's will be done, my lord," said the surgeon, gravely, with a meaning look in his clear, bright eyes, which the prince could not fathom.

"Ay, ay; so be it. A daughter! Well, well, I am content," he sighed.

But he was far from being content, and, leaning his head upon both hands, sighed deeply, again and again.

But suddenly it flashed across his mind that it was not simply to communicate this not very welcome news that the grave and sagacious Sir David Orleton had taken such unusual precautions for privacy. It could not be that this conversation had been begun in the parchment room of Zurichbold Castle for that alone.

"Ah!" exclaimed the prince, startled by this reflection, which sprang into his brain like a jet of flame. "You have something else to tell me."

With this exclamation, sharp and sudden, like a cry of alarm, he let fall his hands, and fixed his eyes fearfully upon the surgeon.

"Yes. The child just born to you, my lord, cannot live."

The prince sprang to his feet, grasped the back of the chair with one hand, and with the other lifted upwards—his face convulsed with grief, anger, and despair, also uplifted—cried out, in a low, bitter voice, full of inexpressible agony of heart:

"The curse! the curse of my cousin, Black Senlis! It is still upon me. Great Heaven, have pity!

It is a dying daughter! Perhaps its beloved mother too, my poor wife—"

Here he gave way to a burst of rage, directing his passion towards the surgeon, however, and, springing violently forward in his eagerness to lay hands on him.

The surgeon, well acquainted with the temperament of the prince, was prepared for this attack, and, by an adroit movement of his foot, placed the table between himself and the noble, at the same time saying:

"My lord, it is the will of Heaven."

"True; and I am acting like a madman," said the prince, calmed instantly by the calmness of the surgeon. "Yet, good Orleton, be not so slow in telling me all you have to say. It was not simply to tell me that a daughter, a dying daughter, and not a strong, robust son, was born to me, that you sought this interview. You have more to say. Something worse yet. Is it not so? The princess, my wife, is dying! is she not?"

"No, my lord. Not the princess, your wife, but the child. It cannot live many hours. Yet, when the delirium of which I spoke leaves the mother, she must not find her child dying nor dead. A living, healthy child must be on her bosom."

On hearing these words, spoken slowly and with great deliberation, the prince gazed amazed into the calm, grave, resolute face before him, unable to speak.

"I say," repeated the surgeon, with increased emphasis, "the princess must never know that the child she has seen, and kissed, and caressed, and in her great joy wept and shouted over, has been born to die ere it is a day old."

"Ah! then the princess has embraced and caressed her child?"

"My lord, never have I seen a mother so rejoiced over the birth of a babe—"

"And should she not have rejoiced?" burst from the lips of the prince—lips pale and quivering with emotion—while he clasped his strong hands together and wrung them as if in great pain both of body and mind.

"Poor Agnes! had she not cause to rejoice in the birth of a living child—a babe that might take the place that has been vacant since our first-born, our dear infant son, was so mysteriously lost to us, nine years ago? Oh, could I but know whether that child perished, or was stolen and still lives—somewhere, somewhere! Is that child—our son, our infant boy, our Egbert, dead; or does he live—somewhere, somewhere? It has tortured the brain and heart of my poor wife, day and night, for nine long years. It has nearly driven us mad; it has put gray hair upon my head while yet I am a young man."

"My dear lord," said the clear, calm voice of the surgeon as he approached the prince and gently grasped his lifted hands, "do not give way to such transports of grief. Be yourself again. The past is the past, and grieving over it can do no good, but may do much harm. It is true that your first-born is lost to you, and that we cannot explain that loss. You and I, and all who love and serve you, have done all that could be done to clear up that mystery. We only know that your infant son, Egbert, and his nurse, vanished nine years ago, even as your lordship's elder brother vanished in his infancy, and so left the grand-dukedom of Zurichbold to be inherited by you. As your noble father and mother grieved in vain over the loss of their eldest and first-born son, your father passing away to the grave ignorant of the mystery which shrouded the sudden disappearance of that son, your elder brother, so have you and your wife grieved over the sudden disappearance of your first-born. But your father and mother gave not way to such violent and useless emotion."

"My father and mother, Heaven bless them!" replied the prince, "had still a son left to love. I had none. Three times since we lost our first-born has a child been born to me and my unhappy wife; but, alas! not a living child. And now, when our hearts have been full of hope, of joyful hope, you tell me that the babe just born cannot live to see the light of another day! You tell me this, man, and bid me be calm! What can you know of my agony—you, who have never had wife or child?"

"I warn you, prince, in time. The life, or more, the sanity of the princess, hangs on a thread. Her life is as dear to you as your own, my lord."

"As dear! Would I not gladly give my life to save hers?"

"But to have her live a maniac, a raving mad-woman, or a blank-minded idiot!"

"Great Heaven! Is there danger of so terrible a fate before her?"

"Should she ever learn that this child, just born, came into the world with only a few hours' lease of life, my lord, she may live—for she is of powerful constitution, and robust vitality of body—but only as a maniac or an idiot will she live."

"Can this be true?"

"My lord, I was present when your lady was ushered into this world. I have been her medical attendant for years. I solemnly affirm what I say. If the princess find her infant dead when she regains her consciousness, her brain will be shattered for ever, even as this."

As the surgeon spoke the last word he raised a delicate porcelain vase from the table and dashed it upon the stone floor at his feet.

"Good Heaven! Then what is to be done?"

"A child, strong, healthy, robust, of undoubted vitality, must be found and substituted for the infant which is now dying by her side. It was after the child had been dressed and placed in its mother's arms by the two nurses, and after she had shouted and wept for joy over it, that I examined it, and saw that it had but a few hours to live. At once I resolved what to do. I gave the princess a potion, almost immediate in its effect, which produced drowsiness, mild delirium, and then deep sleep. The power of the potion will last for two or three hours. If, during that time, she wakes, the same mild and harmless delirium will prevail. The two women may be trusted. They are faithful to your house. They know what I have done, and what I desire shall be done. Had it not become known to the princess that her infant was a girl, I would urge that the child to be substituted should be a male infant—"

The prince frowned, and something like a shudder crept over him. Proud, noble, and upright, his mind revolted from the intended deception—a deception to be practised not only upon his beloved and honoured wife, but also upon the world.

"Do you know what you ask me to do?" he demanded, in a husky voice, placing his hands upon the surgeon's shoulders. "You are asking me to palm off a false heir to the baronial estates of Zurichbold. You are asking me to deceive my wife, to deceive the world, to cut off the rights of inheritance which lawfully belong to my kinsmen."

The eyes of the prince were like flame, his face pale, and his powerful frame trembled violently.

The surgeon, calm and grave, firm and clear in speech, replied:

"I am asking you not to make your wife a maniac. As for your kinsmen, they have given you cause to hate them. As for the world, it cares very little who inherits the estates of Zurichbold, since they must be inherited by some one. Come."

The surgeon opened the door, and gliding his arm within that of the confused and unhappy prince, led him forth again into the main hall of the castle.

There were scores of the household and retainers of the great dukedom assembled in the hall.

"They know it!" whispered the prince to the surgeon as his swift glance remarked the eager and expectant faces around.

"They have expected something," replied the surgeon, calmly.

And then, with a loud, clear voice, he added, addressing those within hearing:

"My friends, let there be no loud rejoicing within the castle, for the noble princess is feeble. But observe the time-honoured customs of the great dukedom of Zurichbold. See to it, steward, that there be no lack of ale, wine and food to those who may assemble, and let all drink long life and happiness to the infant heiress of the dukedom of Zurichbold."

A subdued shout of gladness rolled through all that part of the castle, reaching even the ears of the two faithful women in a retired wing of the great building, who watched, one at the bedside of the sleeping princess, and the other at the state cradle of the child which had been born to die and the rejoicings which heralded its birth.

"Come, my lord, we have no time to lose," whispered the surgeon as he quickened his steps and tightened his grasp upon the arm of the prince. "If you would give a father's kiss to a living child, be speedy."

With a suppressed groan the unhappy prince complied, and, as he and the surgeon disappeared, there were many who whispered, as they withdrew to begin the rejoicings:

"The poor prince! After all, what is a daughter when a son was prayed for?"

CHAPTER II.

Weep no more, nor sigh, nor groan,
Sorrow calls no time that's gone;
Violets plucked, the sweetest rain
Makes not fresh nor grow again.

Dumas and Fletcher.

THE apartment in which the Princess of Zurichbold was sleeping, her senses held in the thrall of the cunning potion administered by the surgeon, was dimly lighted by a single wax candle, for though the sun had not yet set, the windows were carefully shielded and rendered impervious to the light of day by heavy curtains of rich and costly silk.

The two women who attended, and who were to become guardians of a most grave and important secret, and accomplices in a deception fraught with serious and perilous responsibilities, were women of staid and decorous demeanour, sedate and matronly in feature and manner, intelligent and prudent. One was the mother of the young steward of the castle, the other a spinster. The former a widow, Esther Warmly by name; the latter, Ida Le Clair, and not past middle age. Two persons more discreet, prudent, and reticent concerning secrets entrusted to them, were not to be found in all Germany.

On the sumptuous bed lay the princess, sleeping profoundly, and near her sat Ida Le Clair, silently fanning the pale and beautiful face of her noble mistress.

Silent, grave, and thoughtful was the kind-hearted spinster as she gazed sadly upon the sleeping lady, wondering if the deception in which she had agreed to take a part was right or wrong, and whether in the end, in the far-off future, more evil than good would result from it.

By a cradle of satin and ivory ornamented with gold, sat Esther Warmly, grave and thoughtful too, but firm in her belief that the intended deception was not only just and right but necessary.

The plot had not been a sudden conception in the active mind of the surgeon, nor had he but recently revealed it to these two women. It had been in his mind for months. It had been as long in the thoughts of Ida Le Clair and Esther Warmly.

The surgeon had been seriously alarmed for the mind of the princess for years, and he had made her case an anxious study. He had resolved that if ever again she bore a child, that whether the child lived or not, she should rear one in the belief that it was her own.

That which had happened, therefore, was prepared for, as will be seen hereafter.

The surgeon, active and vigilant as if his own vital interests depended upon his success, had already partially selected the infant to be substituted, in case no living child was born.

His scheme for a time had seemed useless, and until a close examination of the infant of the princess told him it had not long to live, he had rejoiced in the hope that there would be no need of deception.

That examination had told him the intended deception must be carried out promptly. He devotedly loved and admired both the prince and the princess, and if he felt any scruples in the matter, he resolutely crushed them.

The two women, therefore, were prepared for all that was to follow, provided the consent of the prince were first obtained. The surgeon, in his zeal, had re-

solved to deceive both the prince and princess, for it would have been as easy to deceive both as one. But the two women, born upon the estates of the principality and loyal to their chief, had refused to lend their aid to so grave a deception without the consent and approval of the prince.

Therefore, most reluctantly, and dreading angry opposition, the surgeon had, at the last moment, as it were, revealed to the prince his plot.

Still uneasy and anxious at heart, he led the prince to the door of the princess's chamber.

The door was locked from within, but at the recognised rap of the surgeon Ida Le Clair opened it, and, obeying a gesture he made, closed and carefully locked it as he and the prince entered with soft and cautious tread.

The prince sank upon his knees at the bedside, near his unconscious wife, and gazed with eager fondness upon her beautiful but fearfully pallid face.

Tears of anguish he dared not speak rolled down his cheeks, and broken sighs, almost sob, fluttered from his lips. His whole heart and soul, and all his dreams of earthly happiness, were centred in his lovely, loving, and adored wife. Without her, and the pure, deep love ever beaming for him from her lustrous eyes, all the world was as nothing.

This the sagacious surgeon well knew and had counted upon when he waited until the last moment he dared to wait, and led him into that chamber of birth and death.

"Heaven forgive me if I am doing an evil deed," thought the surgeon as he turned aside to brush away a tear, after silently contemplating the mournful scene before him. "Yet my heart bids me save the mind of the princess and the happiness of the prince."

Pausing a moment to crush down a weakness very unusual in him, he softly glided to the cradle of the dying infant.

A single glance told him that the child had but a few more minutes to live. It was dying a gentle and painless death. To an inexperienced eye it would have seemed softly sleeping. The surgeon knew that it was dying.

Stepping lightly across the room, he placed his hand softly upon the shoulder of the prince, and whispered:

"Come, my lord, or it will be too late."

The prince was about to rise, when the sleeping mother spoke, spoke clearly, even in her sleep.

"Thank Heaven!" she said, while a smile of ecstatic rapture fluttered around her pale, beautiful lips, "we have a living child, dear Eustace! Rejoice with me, my beloved husband; though it is a daughter—rejoice!"

"Even in her delirious sleep she remembers that it is a daughter," whispered the surgeon. "Come, my lord, or you may not give a father's farewell kiss to a living child."

Prince Eustace hastened to bend his tearful face over the tiny, expiring babe, upon whose birth he had founded so many hopes of love and ambition. Restraining a sob, he pressed his lips to the brow of the infant.

The touch disturbed it, for it opened its eyes, till then closed, seemed to gaze up lovingly into the dark orbs beaming upon it, closed those eyes again, and, breathing gently and quickly, died.

Its spotless life sank into the ocean of eternity as a snow-flake falls and melts upon the bosom of some vast lake. Not a ripple, not a motion, marked its going.

"Again, for the fifth time, I am childless!" groaned the prince, sobbing convulsively, and leaning his head upon the shoulder of the surgeon. "Oh, Orleton, my friend, had I never seen it alive, my heart would not be so bruised in seeing it dead!"

"My lord—"

"Childless! childless! even to my grave!"

"She must never know it, my lord," said the surgeon, pointing towards the bed, and tightly grasping the prince's hand. "See, my lord, you are a strong man, in the full flush of health and manhood, and yet you weep like a child, your brain whirls, your heart writhes with speechless grief! You tremble, you can scarcely stand; but for my arm you would sink down and beat your face upon the floor. Can she bear this shock?—she, the mother, sick, feeble, ready to die from exhaustion?"

"Ah! she speaks."

"My child! my babe!" cried the princess, in her delirium. "Give me my child—here! in my arms—here—quick!"

Obedient to a gesture of the surgeon, Esther Warmly quickly, yet tenderly, snatched up the inanimate little form from the cradle, and placed it upon the bosom of the princess.

The dead infant lay, limp and pale, upon the breast of the delirious mother.

The two women clasped each other in their arms, and sobbed upon each other's necks.

The prince would have fallen, but for the chair which received him as he staggered under this load of sorrow and bereavement.

The surgeon, pale, but calm and active, hastily prepared a potion, and moved cautiously towards the princess, as she caressed her lifeless darling.

But she, though awake, was still unconscious of the truth, and of the presence of all, except of that which she stroked and foulded with her pale, beautiful hands.

"Mine own!" she said, embracing it. "At last! Oh, Eustace, my dear husband, at last! It sleeps—it sleeps! Oh, were it to die! Ah, hadst thou, my darling one, been born as the others were, I would have gone mad!"

With a quick, firm hand, the surgeon poured the potion he had prepared between the mother's murmuring lips.

In a moment after the clinging embrace relaxed, the arms of the princess sank down from her breast—she was asleep again: at least she was senseless.

"It was time!" the surgeon ejaculated as he wiped great drops from his face. "In a moment more she would have recovered her reason—only to lose it for ever in discovering the truth! My lord?"

"Oh, Orleton!" sobbed the unhappy prince. "Poor Agnes!"

The surgeon lifted the dead infant, saying:

"A living child must be found by the princess when I permit her reason to return. She will demand it. If she do not find it she will die, or go mad."

"See to it! See to it!" groaned the prince, wildly. "I—I can do nothing!"

"We have your consent, my lord?"

"Yes, yes! Heaven save the life and reason of my wife!"

"Prince Eustace," said Esther and Ida as they knelt before him, "do you command us to obey Sir David?"

"Yes, yes! Save the life and reason of the princess. I command it," replied the prince, covering his face with his hands; "and may Heaven forgive me for the deception, and preserve the honour of my house!"

He said no more, but rising, kissed the cheek and lips of his wife, and hurried away to shut himself and his bitter grief from the gaze of all.

"There is no time to be lost," said the surgeon, as he placed the dead child in the arms of Ida Le Clair. "You know what to do with this."

Ida Le Clair placed the little body in the cradle, as if it were still alive, and sat down near it, weeping.

"Esther, you are to attend to the princess. Here—I will write upon this paper how and when you are to give the medicines. See that you make no mistake. Within three days I shall return with an infant girl. Had that little angel been born a boy, my absence would not be so long. I have far and fast to ride. Have no fears for the life of the princess. It is not that which is in danger. Her strong constitution will carry her safely to health again, if she do not discover the death of her child. Give these medicines as I have here written down."

Esther, to whom the writing of the surgeon was familiar, read distinctly that which he had set down, and placed the paper in her bosom.

"Right," said the surgeon. "Follow that, and have no fear. Should I be absent even a week do not be alarmed, but continue to follow what I have set down."

Having said this, the surgeon stepped quickly to a large mirror at one end of the room, a broad mirror taller than himself, and affixed to the wall, the lower end of the massive frame almost touching the floor.

Placing his hand upon the framework of this mirror, he drew heavily downward upon it, and it slowly sank from sight, revealing an alcove behind it, from which descended a small spiral stairway of stone.

Stepping into this alcove, the surgeon turned and said, in a grave, warning tone:

"As you value the life and reason of your noble mistress, make no mistake, no variation in giving the medicines. I shall return with an heiress to the estate and title of Zurichbold."

A moment after saw the great mirror glide slowly and noiselessly upward, back to its deceptive setting.

The two women, gazing into it, saw reflected their own pale, excited features, and in the background the gorgeous cradle of satin, ivory, and gold, with the still form and motionless face of the dead infant, near the sumptuous bed of the unconscious mother.

CHAPTER III.

How wondrous few, by avarice uncontrolled,
Have virtue to subdue the thirst for gold. *Broomes.*
At the very same hour that beheld the bitter grief of the prince in the presence of his dying infant, a wife and mother was apparently swiftly passing from earth, in an apartment of a lonely forest inn, fully a hundred miles from the castle of Zurichbold.

This inn, known by the few who ever sought its squalid hospitality by the title of the "The Iron Hand Inn," was situated upon the borders of the great forest at that time called Giant Forest; so called, not because of any men of great size who might be imagined to have their abode therein, but because of its vastness, the immense size and density of its trees, and to distinguish it from another forest many miles distant, and smaller in extent.

The inn itself was an old and shattered edifice of stone and wood, and the road which it faced and glowered at—hanging over it, as if ever ready to fall to pieces upon it in a paroxysm of sullen rage—had once been the main road through that part of the country. Years had passed, however, since another and more travel-favoured road had been made miles away, leaving the old road to chance or lost travellers and the once-famous and thriving "Iron Hand Inn" to starve for want of custom.

The "Iron Hand" was owned and occupied by Rudolph Schwartz and his wife Ulghitha; and some weeks before the surgeon of Zurichbold Castle set forth to seek for a new-born and living child to deceive the unfortunate princess, that her reason, and perhaps her life, might be preserved—a solitary mule, bearing a handsome, young, but wearied woman, halted before the inn.

Seated upon the same humble animal, with his arms clasped around the woman before him, sat a well-grown boy, apparently ten years of age.

The woman, boy, and mule, all looked weary and travel-worn. There was an expression of great anxiety and pain upon the pale, handsome face of the woman; and the intelligent features and quick flashing eyes of the lad also expressed anxiety.

The mule halted, and hung his head until his nose nearly touched the lowest step of the stone stairway which ran steeply up from the edge of the old road to the main entrance of the inn, as if he would have said, if he could:

"Thus far, and not one step more, can I go!"

Rudolph Schwartz, the surly proprietor of the gloomy old inn, standing at the top of the stairs, leaning against the doorway, had seen these weary three approaching from afar along the winding road.

"There's some one coming, dame," he had said, when his eye first took in the travellers, and speaking to some one within the house.

That some one was his wife, Ulghitha, who immediately made her appearance at her husband's side to gaze out.

They were an ugly, disagreeable-looking pair, with their ugly characters stamped plainly upon every feature. He was a tall, gaunt-framed, hard-faced man, with coarse red hair standing out like bristles on every side of his large, low-browed head; a huge, large-lipped mouth, nearly concealed amid a forest of red, coarse moustache; eyes small, deep-set, under projecting eyebrows, like those of a wild boar—eyes cruel, fierce, and keen, rapacious as those of a hungry wolf, avaricious as those of a miserly gambler over his cards.

His wife—with long, uncombed, tangled yellow hair, sunburnt almost to a dirty white, with great seams, scars and rust-spots all over her thin, lean face, and coal-black, sparkling eyes, which made one start with fear and dislike, as from the eyes of a great hoary rat, about to spring and bite—was as ugly as he.

Both were coarsely and scantily clad, though not from lack of means to be better clothed.

An ugly, sullen, savage-looking pair they were, as they fixed their baleful gaze inquiringly on those approaching.

"It is a woman," said Schwartz, surlily, after gazing a while. "At first I thought it might be a messenger sent to see if we had ready a babe for somebody who wants one not his own."

"It is too soon to expect a messenger for that. If one came, 'twas to be about the middle of next month, and we lack a week of being at the end of this," replied Ulghitha.

"It does not matter," growled Schwartz, with a great oath. "I've had no luck but bad luck, so far; nor you either. So there's small chance for us to win the hundred gold pieces we were to have if all went well."

"But even if we don't, we have received ten, and are to receive ten more for our trouble in looking about. I wonder who it is that needs a new-born child, and can't say whether he shall choose a boy or a girl."

"For that I care not a straw, nor what becomes of the child, so I could only lay my hands on one."

"As for that, it should be so that both a male and a female infant could be at our command, though only one is to be chosen. Why, I think there is a boy behind the woman," said Ulghitha, gazing eagerly towards the slowly approaching mule and his double burden.

"So there is, and I want neither of them under

what is left of the roof of the 'Iron Hand.' They do not come in the guise of such as have money to spend. They have wandered from the main road, and wish only to remain for the night. I'll bid them go. If it was a lone merchant, now, with a fat portmanteau, and deep pockets lined with chinking coin, I'd give him hearty welcome for the night."

"Ay, and for many a night, wouldn't we, Rudolph?" chuckled the woman.

"Till the day of doom, my lass."

Whereupon this unholy pair sent forth such a roar of laughter that it reached the ears of the travellers.

"Oh, they are laughing there, mother," said the boy, in a cheering tone, "and that sounds well, even if they are laughing at us."

The woman, who seemed to have resigned all choice of the route to the mule, sighed and said:

"We must crave rest, food, and shelter there, my son, whether they laugh at us or not. We have lost our way, Ernest, and can go no farther to-day. Indeed I fear my strength will give out before we reach the inn. But for your arms, my boy, I should fall from my seat."

Her last words told that the lad did not have his arms around the woman to support himself, but to aid her. He clung with his feet and legs to the slow-paced mule, while his young arms devoted all their strength to enable the woman to retain her seat.

And thus they moved on until, as has been told, the weary mule halted and placed his nose upon the base of the stone steps.

"Well?" said Schwartz, in a surly tone, as they halted. "What wish you here?"

"Kind sir," replied the woman—and her tone and accent, as she spoke German as one who was of French birth or rearing, declared that she was a person of education and gentle culture—"we have lost our way, and beg the hospitality of this house, which seems to be an inn;" and here she glanced towards the sign of the inn, a great beam of solid oak, thrust out over the door, and carved to represent a huge forearm, with an enormous hand extended, as if offering welcome to all. This sign, rudely sheathed in rusty tin, had given to the inn the name it then bore—the "Iron Hand"—and at it the stranger glanced appealingly as she spoke.

"You come to beg hospitality, do you?" said Schwartz, sneeringly. "We entertain no beggars here; so pass on."

The pale face of the handsome woman flushed a deep red at these rough words, and her beautiful blue eyes sparkled with restrained indignation as she replied, quickly:

"We are not beggars. I have wherewith to pay for food and shelter, for the night at least."

"Take them in, take them in!" whispered Ulghitha, who had been eyeing the stranger sharply. "Here's luck cast at your door, my man. Take her in, whether she has money or not."

She whispered something in his ear, at which he started, and stared at the stranger, while his eyes shone with an evil joy.

"Shelter and all you desire, good lady, you shall have," cried Ulghitha, hurrying down the steps, and holding her long, strong arms towards the stranger, "whether you can pay for it or not. You are in trouble, and need a woman's care. Jump down, my lad, and I will aid your mother; or is he your son, good lady?"

"He is the son of my husband, madam," began the stranger, who thereupon slipped from her seat as if in a swoon, and was caught in the sinewy arms of Ulghitha.

Her sudden fall dislodged the lad from his seat also, but he was upon his feet in an instant, with an ease and quickness that proved he possessed extraordinary agility and suppleness, as well as strength.

"Oh, mother! dear mother!" he exclaimed, with affectionate fear and grief in his face, and springing towards the stranger. "Speak to me! speak to me! Oh, she is dying! She is dead!"

"No, no, you little simpleton," said Ulghitha, roughly, as she bore the stranger up the steps. "She has only fainted. I will take care of her."

The next moment saw Schwartz and the lad alone before the inn—the latter standing near the mule, and the former rubbing his great hands together and grinning, as if at recognition of some good fortune unexpectedly thrown into his grasp.

"Where shall I lead the mule?" asked Ernest, after taking off the saddle and putting it over his head.

"The mule?" said Schwartz, going down the steps, and eyeing the animal as if to study his value. "He is in bad plight, in truth. What is your name, my lad?"

"Ernest Van De Veer," replied the boy, promptly, and gazing from under the flaps of the saddle at the questioner.

He was a straight, stout, handsome boy, with keen

black, bold eyes, which did not quail under the surly, sullen stare of Rudolph Schwartz, but regarded him with a daring intelligence, as if studying him as he had studied the mule—to see what he was worth. He was well clad, too, in garments of costly material, though the dust of travel had sadly grimed them. His accent and air told that his rearing had been among a class far superior to that of the surly innkeeper. Young as he was he carried a man's dagger in his belt, and a man's courage in his bold black eyes.

"Van De Veer is your name? I used to know a diamond merchant of that name in Prague. I lived there once. Is the diamond merchant your father?"

"It is a wise son that knows his own father," replied the lad, who was gifted with a wit far beyond his years. "What shall I do with the mule?"

"Oh, I will take care of him. Have you no luggage?"

"No; we have been robbed."

"Robbed! When?"

"Early this morning, friend. But we have money enough left to pay for a night's lodging."

"Oh, have you?" retorted the innkeeper, again walking around the mule. "Yes, even if you have no money, lad, the mule is worth something."

"And if we had no money, would you keep the mule to pay you for giving us a night's shelter? That would be hard," said the boy, gazing sharply at the man, whom it was plain he did not like.

"It is a good and serviceable brute," muttered Schwartz. "I have long needed such an animal. It is a little travel-racked at present, but is really a fine animal. All's fish that comes to my net, and this mule must be mine by hook or by crook."

He turned to the boy, and said:

"I'll take care of the mule. There's a good stable in the rear. Here, give me the saddle."

"No; I'll take care of mother's saddle. It and the mule are all the robbers left us. I can put it somewhere in the house, can't I?"

"It is not worth much," replied Schwartz, after a stare at the ragged and well-worn side-saddle.

"You may do what you like with it. Nobody will steal it, for what it's worth."

With these words he walked away, leading the mule he coveted to the rear of the inn.

The boy, however, hastened up the steps with the saddle on his head, thinking:

"There are diamonds, worth a king's ransom, hidden in its padding; and if you suspected that, you would think more of the saddle than of the mule."

He hurried on into the great dilapidated house, nearly all of the rooms of which were vacant and wholly unfit for occupancy, the windows beaten in by years of storm, and the walls and floors mouldy and decaying; but he soon found and entered the one into which Uligha had carried his mother.

In so speedily finding it he was guided by the moaning of the unfortunate lady, and the harsh voice of Uligha, striving to attune itself to a softness it seemed to attain.

The apartment, though small, and scantily furnished, was fit for occupancy, and as Ernest entered, still bearing the saddle upon his head, he saw that his mother was reclining upon a low, coarsely but comfortably furnished bed, and Uligha near her.

He cast his burden into one corner of the room, and then ran to his mother, who said, in a gentle, resigned tone, as he clasped one of her hands in his:

"My dear boy, I fear we must remain here much longer than to-night. I feel that I am going to be very ill, Ernest. Perhaps, however, a night's rest will restore my strength, so that we may continue our journey to-morrow."

"Oh, I hope so, dear mother, for I do not like—" began the boy, but a quick and warning pressure of his mother's hand checked him.

"Ah, he does not like us," said Uligha, with a shrug of her sharp shoulders. "True, we are very poor, but we are, I hope, very kind. I think a good night's rest will enable your mother to continue the journey to-morrow, though I should not advise it. But I must leave you for a moment, to get what poor entertainment I can for you, madam. You need food and wine, and of the latter we have a little of the best. Pray don't judge us and our poor inn simply by our outside."

She then hurried away, and soon after met Schwartz, who had returned from the stables, or, rather, what had once been worthy of that name.

"Rudolph," she whispered, "she will be able to ride away to-morrow."

"She may be, but I'll take care the mule sha'n't be able to carry her," he replied, with a grin.

"She has the eye and air of a very resolute woman," said Uligha, shaking her tangled yellow hair, "and if she is strong enough to-morrow, and I am sure she will be, if she hasn't a mule to ride

she will walk. It's only thirty miles to Karidamm village, and she knows she is not far from it."

"But she must not be able to stand on her feet to-morrow," growled Schwartz. "There's a chance for easy winning of a hundred gold pieces in keeping her here, and then there's the mule—a fine animal. Besides, I don't think it would hurt us if she were to die in the 'Iron Hand.'"

"If it could be managed without her dying, I'd like it much better, Rudolph."

"Dead women tell tales no more than dead men," whispered Schwartz. "I want that mule—it is a splendid Spanish brute. I have examined him, and I have not seen his equal for years. Then I think there'll be rare pickings, the woman being dead."

"Rare pickings! Why, I noticed that she has not an atom of jewellery about her," said Uligha. "Only a plain gold ring, such as every married woman wears. I felt about her too, as I carried her to the bed, but found nothing like hidden money."

"The boy says his name is Ernest Van De Veer, and I think that he is the son and she the wife of the diamond merchant who escaped our hands five years ago," said Schwartz. "The lad says they were robbed early this morning; but if they were, I'm sure they contrived to save something valuable. The mother is worth our care, Uligha. Contrive to learn what you can, and as soon as you can. At any rate, she must not be able to continue her journey, even if we have to keep her locked up. A little shrewd spice, in some soothing drink, she needs must have—"

"Oh, as for that," interrupted Uligha, "were she a strong and healthy lion, and not a feeble woman needing a woman's care, I could give her a posset that would make her as weak as a babe. I'll see to that. But the boy? what of him? We have forgotten the boy! He is as sharp as a thorn. One need not look twice into those keen black eyes of his to learn that he has almost the sense of a man. What of him, Rudolph?"

"The boy?" said Schwartz, musingly. "The boy? He must be got rid of, that is true. I'll take care of him. He won't leave his mother while she is alive, and you know we must not throw away the chance of winning the handsome gold pieces. If we have an infant at our command for the stranger, who charged us to have one of each sex ready for his choice, three weeks hence, we are to have the reward, whether the infant be chosen by the stranger or not. So we must not lose that chance by alarming the woman, and the boy must remain with her until that matter is all secure. After that, I'll see to him."

"If it could be managed without hurting him. He might be sent away—carried away, or something."

"Bosh! You are growing tender-hearted, woman," replied Schwartz, with an oath. "I tell you he is too sharp to be let live, if we are to do anything. Make quick end of him, and drop him where others have been dropped before."

"You mean into the Pit?" said Uligha, with a shudder.

"Where else? Did any that we have dropped into it ever get out to blab black stories on the landlord of 'The Iron Hand'?"

"The Pit?" muttered Uligha. "I dreamed, the other night, that I was dropped into it—by you, Rudolph Schwartz."

She stepped to the road door as she muttered these words, and Schwartz followed her, for both had heard the sound of rapidly approaching hoofs.

They gazed out together. The sun was just setting, and its beams burnished as with gold the broad breastplate of an armed horseman, fast galloping up towards the "Iron Hand" inn.

"Uligha!" exclaimed Schwartz, in a hoarse whisper, as the features of the horseman grew clear to his gaze, "it is Van De Veer, the diamond merchant."

(To be continued.)

THE MITRAILLEUSE.—The Duke of Cambridge, the Secretary of State for War, and a large number of general, artillery, and engineer officers, visited Shoeburyness on Tuesday, the 30th ult., to witness trials of the Montigny and Gatling mitrailleuses and other experimental practice. The rapidity of fire of the Gatlings excited a great deal of attention, and the gun is certainly very largely improved since its first appearance at these shooting grounds some three or four years ago. The practice against targets, representing troops in open column, with the Armstrong breech-loading field gun, with shells, having the percussion fuses recently modified in the Royal Laboratory, was eminently successful, the Shrapnel shells being burst upon the front row, and doing vast execution on the other ranks to the rear. An iron casemate port for shields, backed with iron

concrete, was also shot at by the 600-pounder; its failure was so complete as to render it likely that the doom of this composition will now be sealed.

THE FLOWER OF EL ALMEDA.

CHAPTER XIII.

Beware of desperate steps: the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow, will have passed away.

Cooper.

MARINA was standing with the dagger still held in her hand, when the hangings of the door upon the opposite side were parted, and Zara came into the room.

At a glance she took in the position of her mistress; the colour forsook her face, and she trembled so that she could hardly stand. She was fearful that she then and there meant to take her life rather than submit to the destiny which stared her in the face.

By a violent effort Zara recovered her presence of mind, and, springing forward, she clasped the hand of her mistress that held the dagger.

"What wouldst thou do, oh, my mistress?" she cried. "Surely thou wouldst not take the life that Allah has given thee, which, in due time, He will require at thy hands?"

"Yes, good Zara, it was in my heart to do the deed, even as thou spoke. Why should I care to live, with the fate there is before me? Didst thou not know that the hated prince has been here, but now, to see me? But I'll bid he prosper with his wooing, I assure you."

"Thou shouldst not talk thus, my mistress!" cried the handmaiden, with another shudder, as she firmly, but gently, forced the dagger from her hand. "It is wicked."

"I know it, good Zara; but what can I do?"

And the maiden reclined her head in grief and despair upon the shoulder of her faithful servant.

"Do!" cried Zara, with spirit. "I would defy them to the last; and as for Prince Bajaz, you should have done as I did, but now, with his servant. He would have made love to me in the servants' hall, and I gave him such a pat upon his ear that he was glad to take himself off, and did not try to molest me again."

"But such a proceeding as that would hardly do for me, Zara," sighed her mistress.

"Thou art right. This dagger better serves thy purpose when the prince would play the lover. But thou shouldst have no thoughts of using it upon thyself."

"Have I not told thee often, Zara, that I would rather die than wed with him?"

"Thou hast, my mistress. But there is still another chance. When darkness comes, this night let us flee from the castle, and so escape from thy cruel father and the prince."

"And can we do it?" asked Marina, eagerly, a new hope rising in her heart.

"I know not, as yet, my mistress, but we can try. Had not Zarik been shut up in a cell, I could bring him to manage it for us."

"Thou hast brought him where he is, Zara. Had it not been for thy arts, he would not have gone with us to the dungeons, and so got himself into his present trouble."

"We could not help it. It was all the chance we had; but I do hope that my master will have compassion, and not punish him too badly."

"Alas, I fear he will be inexorable!" said Marina. "He is so set upon my wedding the prince that he would slay all who stood in the way of accomplishing his ends."

"And yet he may slay none, and still come short of his object. Have good courage, my mistress, and all may yet be well. If the thing can be done, we will escape from the castle to-night, and fly towards Castile. We can, at the most, but fall into the hands of the robbers again, and that would be better than to remain here for thou to become the unwilling bride of the prince."

"Anything would be better than that, even death," returned Marina.

"Then we may find the knight and his squire, who will surely receive and protect us."

A slight flush suffused the face of Marina, and she felt that she would have given all she possessed had she been, at that moment, under the protection of his strong arm.

"Alas, Zara, I fear that he is far away." "Not so far but what we may find him. Now you remain quiet here, while I go forth and see what I can do. I must exercise my skill upon some of the guards, and try to win them over to my side."

"Go, and may Allah prosper thee," said her mistress. The faithful handmaiden kissed the hand she had taken, and then departed, leaving Marina alone with her thoughts. And mournful ones they were, filling her gentle heart with sadness.

If Zara failed, all hopes of escape seemed lost, and nothing remained but death, or to obey the will of her father and wed the prince.

To plead any more with either for mercy she knew would be unavailing. She might as well try to evoke sympathy from a heart of stone.

Then her thoughts would wander away to the knight—he of another race who had won her heart, and she wondered where he was, and by what means he had managed to make his escape from the castle.

If she were only far away, and beneath his protection, all her troubles would be over.

And so, with these thoughts in her mind, she sat till the daylight faded away and the darkness had again spread over hill and moor, castle and plain.

A slave came in, bearing a perfumed lamp, which she set down and then glided noiselessly away.

The lamp burned steadily, diffusing a soft light about the apartment, and causing the shadows to flee away into the corners, where they remained huddled together in the most grotesque manner.

Still Zara did not come to report the success of her mission, and Marina, reclining upon a divan, listened eagerly to every footfall that came from that direction.

Anon a messenger came from her father, commanding that she and her attendants should make the most of their time, for the nuptials were to be celebrated at an early hour the next morning, as pressing business called the prince back to Court.

To this message Marina sent back no word. Mutely she received it, and mute she was when the messenger departed.

The evening was far gone when Zara glided in and sank down at her feet.

A look into her face assured her that her mission had been unsuccessful, and her heart sank still deeper in her bosom.

"Thou hast not succeeded?" she said as she rested her hand upon the head of her faithful Zara.

"Alas, I have not, my mistress. I have done my best to bribe the guards, but to no purpose. They tell me that Abal Hassan has said that if any one shall go forth or enter the castle to-night without a pass from him, that every guard shall be put to death."

"Then there is no hope?"

"None, oh, my mistress."

"There is yet one way of escape, my Zara. The dagger. What hast thou done with it?"

"I have it safe where thou shalt do thyself no harm with it."

"Give it me."

"Never, my mistress. Allah would never pardon thee. Rather than take my own life, I would have that of the prince."

"That would be murder."

"Still not so bad as taking thine own life. But hark! Some one comes this way. I did think that all had retired."

A stealthy footstep came near, and a moment after the hangings of the doorway were parted, and the head of Icasach, the dwarf, was thrust into the room.

Neither Marina nor her handmaiden could resist a start and cry of surprise at his unlooked-for appearance, for they knew not of his return—and the sentence his master had passed upon him.

But Marina suddenly bethought herself that he might know of the fate of the knight, as they disappeared together, and with a motion of her hand she beckoned for him to enter.

The dwarf came in noiselessly, and with his finger to his lips to enjoin silence. Approaching the divan, he knelt before her, and waited for her to speak.

"Where hast thou been, Icasach?" she asked, in an eager tone, as she bent down towards him.

"It would take long to tell it all, my lady," he answered. "But last night I did guide the Christian knight from his cell, and so gave him his liberty."

"Allah be thanked. Then he is safe," cried Marina. "Icasach! I did never give thee thy just due. I thought that thou didst delight in evil, and that there was no good in thy heart. But I know better now, and I take all back that I have thought."

The dwarf winced under this. He did not think that such praise in truth belonged to him.

He knew that he had delighted in all that was wicked, and had been a willing tool for his master. He knew also that he had not aided in the escape of the knight for any love he bore for him, but because he had been obliged to, or lose his life. Determined now to make a clean breast of it, he related in as few words as possible what had transpired from the time he had fallen into the power of the knight to his being consigned to the foul dungeon by Abal Hassan on his return.

Marina listened until he had finished, and then a new hope sprang up in her heart.

"How comest thou at liberty now?" she asked. "Has Abal Hassan set thee at liberty again?"

The eyes of the dwarf glowed with suppressed passion.

"No, my lady," he replied. "He left me to my fate to starve and die, after I had served him so long and faithfully. But there was one thing that he forgot. He did not remember that, by his own orders, I had keys that would let me go whither I would. He forgot to have them taken from me, and so it was easy enough for me to escape from my cell when I chose. I waited until this hour, and then I came forth, having forsworn his service for ever. I was going to make my escape at once from the castle, to seek for the knight, who I know will befriend me, when I bethought myself of thee, my lady, and whether you would rather flee than remain and become the bride of the prince whom, I learned, has come to bear thee away. So once out of the dungeons, I hastened hither. Wilt thou go?"

"Gladly. Surely it must have been Allah that sent you to my aid. For hours has Zara been laying plans whereby we might escape, but they all came to naught."

"I think it was my anger against thy father, rather than Allah, that sent me here," said the dwarf. "I have served him long and faithfully, as thou knowest, and for what I could not help my reward was a foul dungeon. But this will be a glorious revenge. How he will fume and rage when he finds that thou art gone. And then, when thou art wedded to this Christian knight, as I know thou wilt be, for he loves thee as few men love, then Abal Hassan will wish that he had thought of others as well as himself."

At the first sound of a prospect of escape Zara had been on the alert, and by this time she had brought her mistress's wrappings, and had placed them upon her. Her own were soon ready, and then they signified to the dwarf that they were prepared to accompany him.

"Follow me, and tread lightly," he said. "If we are discovered now, all is lost. Have a care, and Allah will not forsake us now."

With footfalls that gave back no sound, the dwarf stole from the apartment, and his two companions followed him with equal caution. Along the corridor, and through the various apartments they passed, avoiding rooms where a light was seen or voices came therefrom. In this way they gained the courtyard, then the dwarf led the way in the direction of the postern door through which he had piloted the other fugitives the night before.

As they drew near the spot he perceived that the caution of Abal Hassan had stationed a guard here for the night. The dwarf had told him that it was by this way that the Christians had made their escape, and he did not mean that it should give exit to others against his will.

For a moment the dwarf was undecided what to do. There seemed but one way for him, and that was to go onward at all hazards. To go back now was death to him, and worse than that to his mistress. So he bade them remain quietly where they were, and then he crept forward amid the shadows in the direction of the door.

The guard was standing with his back towards him, evidently either half asleep or else his mind occupied by some matter that engrossed his whole thought. To dispose of him was the only alternative left to the dwarf, and he crept noiselessly up to him, holding a sharp dagger in his hand. When close upon him, the guard faced suddenly about, and Icasach saw that then was his time. Like the leap of a tiger he sprang upon the sentinel, and buried his weapon in his heart. For a moment only he kept his feet, and then went down never to rise again.

This deed accomplished, the dwarf hurried back to his companions, and beckoned them onward.

They obeyed the signal, and with him approached the door, passing by the body of the fallen man with a shudder.

A minute was spent in fitting the key, and then the dwarf threw open the door, and they passed through and stood without the castle walls.

Icasach quickly unlocked the door, and then he said to his companions:

"Farewell to Abal Hassan. Castile lies before us, and we must reach it as soon as possible. Thou must walk for awhile, my lady, and then when circumstances will allow, we will procure thee a steed to pursue thy flight."

"Have no fears for me, Icasach. Fatigue is nothing to me when I know that I am leaving Prince Bajaz behind me. Let us away, that we may be over the borders of Castile as soon as possible."

"I am ready, and may Allah direct our footsteps," said the dwarf.

And they hurried on.

(To be continued.)

THE WOUNDS OF THE PRUSSIAN.—It is stated that of the wounded who are received in the German hospitals, the least severely wounded are the

French prisoners who have been hit by the projectiles of the needle-gun. Unless they strike full upon the body, these balls, in the majority of cases, inflict mere flesh wounds. From their elongated form, they turn readily upon striking a bone, and, consequently, the wounds are comparatively trifling. Far more serious are the ragged wounds inflicted by the Chasspôt, which, at short distances, appear to hit extremely hard; but worst of all are the wounds of the mitrailleuse balls, which seem completely to smash any bone against which they strike.

WARLIKE NOVELTIES.—Each war of modern years has brought into prominence one particular mode of attack or defence. The Crimean war (1854-5) demonstrated the utility of ironclad ships. The Italian war (1859) brought rifled cannon into prominence. The American war (1861-5) established the use of torpedoes. The Austro-Prussian war (1866) showed the potency of the needle-gun, and the Franco-Prussian war of 1870 has established the use of the mitrailleuse.

A PRUSSIAN soldier writing to his mother an account of the battle of Wörth, says:—"Our successes have been immense; but our losses, also, are great. The battle at Wörth was worse than that at Königgrätz; we had so many more wounded, for those horrible mitrailleuses were hid in between the vineyards all up the steep hills above Wörth, and the people cowered behind the vines and bushes and fired down in fury upon our advancing troops. We could not get at them till our batteries came up, and when they began to fire in upon the French army there ensued a scene that must have been horrible. We had about 6,000 dead and wounded, but numbers of the wounds are in the legs. Very few shots went higher than the lower parts of the body, but those are the most dangerous. I think the advancing army despised the mitrailleuses too much, and so were uselessly exposed. The artillery came up too late, but from that moment the French boated. I think our fellows had no idea they would run away in that manner."

THE DIAMOND COLLAR.

CHAPTER IX.

Foiled! and thus too! when the race
For me had well begun—
When I, the foremost in the chase,
The prize so nearly won.

Schwearts.

ON the following morning, Miss Thouvenal and her maid were walking in the quadrangle, which was a quaint imitation of a Dutch garden of the bishop's designing, surrounded by a hedge of stunted and closely trimmed yew trees, which at each corner were clipped into the form of a savage beast. Outside of this impenetrable hedge ran an iron railing, and none but the bishop's few and most intimate friends could say that they had ever walked within.

Miss Thouvenal, according to a fashion which she had, was sitting on a rustic garden-chair, gazing dreamily up at the intensely blue sky, which seemed to be pouring its own limitless azure into her own eyes; and her poetical face showed a rapt serenity which told that she was deep in the realms of memory or dream-land.

Presently her maid came from a remote corner of the quadrangle, where she had been gathering coloured mosses, and Gretchen's discreet face expressed no little portent as she stood before her mistress.

"Madam, pardon me for interrupting such fine meditations as yours appear to be."

"Ah!" said Ermengarde, bringing her eyes down, with tears in them. "You have recalled me from happy memories of my childhood. I was looking in yonder pile of clouds, at a perfect reproduction of the halls I shall never behold again; of the minarets, the fountains, the gardens by the Rhine; when I, a careless girl, without thought of future woe, played on my guitar, while my dotting father—"

"Madam!" ejaculated the maid, with deep reproach, "will you always forget how necessary it is to be perfectly silent on such a subject?"

"Can they blame me for imprudence?" cried the lady, wiping away her tears. "Does not their own poet say:

"Give sorrow words. The grief which does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."

"True enough, dear madam, but who knows how many eaves-droppers there may be behind that hedge at your back? I myself have heard a great deal, merely by picking these red morsels of moss off the ground. Listen now to this interview, which, I fear, purports much, and was about you. You are always saying to me, 'I cannot read that bishop,' so I listened, hoping to help you to a decision."

"Was the bishop speaking of me to any one?"

"Yes, indeed; and you might look troubled if he was in the least double-faced; but he is your friend,

as I am sure I have declared from the first. Mr Peregrine Tyrrol must have been prowling about this quadrangle, for I suddenly heard the bishop cry, in a far sterner tone than you'd think he could use:

"So, sirrah, after the promise you made me a month ago, I find you to-day in the undignified position of a spy upon my household. What does this mean?"

"They had plenty of words about it, in which it became evident to me that the intruder had been just about to enter the quadrangle when he was interrupted by the bishop; and I'm sure, by the heavy curses that Herr Tyrrol indulged in, he must have been in a mighty fury. He swore by all the powers of darkness, that since his lordship had chosen to meddle with him and his private amusements, he would revenge himself for his ill-success with the girl by giving to the winds that about Miss Thouvenal which would ruin both her and his lordship.

"Thank Heaven!" cries the bishop, "that poor Mabel has stood firm. And now expend what rage you choose upon me, but in the name of honour and of justice, man, leave my niece unmolested."

"You may be sure, madam, that Gretchen opened her ears wide at that.

"I work slowly, but I'm sure to reach my mark at last," says the low-born fellow; "and, by striking at the niece, I'm sure to reach the uncle in time—pretty sure, your lordship. There's one little link wanted in quite a long chain to make the evidence complete; but when that is in my hands I think Miss Thouvenal may acknowledge me her master."

"Oh, Gretchen! That is horrible!"

"So our good Herr Von Thouvenal thought. I can assure you, madam, I really thought his fingers were twisted in the ruffian's throat, his voice when he answered was so terrible.

"Be silent, or I shall be obliged to strike you to the earth!" he said; and Tyrrol was as still as a stunned cat, while the bishop walked about in his anger. Presently he spoke again.

"You have failed in your infamous snares to entrap Mabel Fane, whom once I rescued from you," says he; "and now, to revenge yourself, you are resolved upon annoying, perhaps ruining, an innocent and most unfortunate lady, whom all men should protect with a special reverence. Sir, I cannot discuss Miss Thouvenal with such a hardened man as you have shown yourself to be, but I protest to high Heaven against the sacrifice you contemplate."

"Oh, I am acutely sensitive to your lordship's horror of my course," says the wretch, with a laugh; "and I'll give the lady one more chance, on condition that you give me the factory girl."

"What do you mean?" asked Herr Von Thouvenal.

"Tell her that it's her duty—that I'm the protector cut out by Heaven in her behalf."

"I wonder the earth didn't open beneath such a beast as that, madam."

"Begone, demon!" cried the bishop; and I came over here, for their voices retreated until I could not hear them. But, dear mistress, is not this story horrible?"

Ermengarde was painfully affected, but not at all from the motives which her maid expected. She sat with her hands tightly clasped, with her cheeks pale, an expression of deep consternation upon her lovely features.

"Who is Mabel Fane, Gretchen?"

"Some poor creature whom Herr Tyrrol has been making love to, I suppose, madam. And to dare to visit his disappointment upon you, the wicked monster."

"Oh, my heart, he is a monster," ejaculated the lady, with flashing eyes. "Let us go to him, girl, and I will command him to leave her unmolested in future."

She impulsively left the quadrangle, and hastened down to the bishop's library, where she had no doubt that she would find them. The dismayed Gretchen followed, urging her in vain to be prudent, but not daring to oppose her.

Jonson hastened to usher her through the stone hall; she waved him aside.

"Uncle," she cried, knocking at the door, "let me enter."

The bishop appeared, and, with a look of astonishment, stood before her.

He might well survey her with that astonished gaze. In her royal blue velvet garments, her ermine tippet, her odd white cap, with lace lappets coming down over each dainty ear, with her starry eyes, and delicate, febrile face, full of fiery command, she appeared in the sombre room with a dazzling splendour.

"My dear Ermengarde, what is this?"

"Mr. Tyrrol—my lord, I wish to see him."

"Hist, madam," whispered the maid; "Jonson has—"

The bishop shut the door.

"My dear lady, what can you wish with him? Pardon me, but such a dastard, such a villain, must not be allowed to speak to you, madam. And besides, he is not here; he was here a few minutes ago, but he has gone."

"Have you let him go without exacting a promise that Mabel Fane shall be safe?"

"Mabel Fane!" cried the bishop, "who has been annoying you with that, madam?"

"Have you allowed any consideration to come between her and your protection?" exclaimed the lady, with increased vehemence. "My lord, was it not enough that I purchased safety by dissimulation and fraud? Must I insure it by the ruin of the innocent?"

Without another word she almost rushed from his presence, her eyes full of tears, her whole frame quivering; and, bewildered by the rapidity of her movements, the bishop set off to visit some of his poor cottagers, with a soul full of harassing anxiety.

When Miss Thouvenal reached her apartments she gave way to a violent passion of tears, which lasted for more than an hour. Her delicate organisation had received a shock which was not likely to be soon overcome. When she recovered her composure, it was only to put into execution a far more perilous purpose.

For this reason she sent for Mrs. Bonhill.

That personage had never been honoured with a special summons to Miss Thouvenal's presence before; she was highly flustered therefore, especially when Gretchen informed her, in vehement gutturals, that Miss Ermengarde had one of her nervous fits.

"I have become interested in a young girl named Mabel Fane," said Ermengarde, "and I would hear where she lives, so that I may render her what assistance is in my power."

"Mabel Fane!" echoed the housekeeper, remembering how unwilling she had been to meddle with such pitch, as she termed her; "perhaps, miss, if you knew that poor creature's troubles, you'd think best not to speak to her herself."

"Tell me her exact history."

"She's naught but a factory girl, miss, a poor, weak creature, who was like to get into mischief, along of the hair from Vionna, taking a fancy to her. His reverence, the bishop, dear man, took her, faintin', in his own arms, from the danger she was in, and hid her away with Widow Cornell, where Mr. Tyrrol wouldn't find her. And the bishop has since cared for her as if she had been the Sovereign of England."

"And she is still at Widow Cornell's cottage?"

"Yes, miss."

"I am going to see her to-day. Can you send any one with me who could show me the way? I shall drive there in the carriage."

"Jonson has been there often enough; he can go, miss, if you wish."

"Then have Burlington at the door as soon as possible. I am going immediately."

Be it here observed that the bishop, among his other acts of munificence on behalf of Miss Thouvenal, had sent to M. Musard, Paris, for an elegant lady's phaeton, which, with a pair of dappled ponies, fiery as the fabled steeds which drew the chariot of the sun, and a handsome youth from London as charioteer, had arrived a few days previously.

Gretchen's smothered dismay exploded into words the instant that Mrs. Bonhill had withdrawn.

"Now, then, madam, what new imprudence do you contemplate?"

"The imprudence of a just action. I am going to save Mabel Fane."

"In Heaven's mercy, madam, consider your own safety first, which is more important than that of fifty factory girls. Would you dare the disastrous results of that villain's vengeance?"

"I will not have the girl's soul lost through my cowardice!" cried Ermengarde, vehemently. "Peace, my girl! Your mistress is still strong enough to remember whose daughter she is."

The flash of her proud blue eyes silenced the maid; she ventured no more remonstrance.

In a few minutes the lady was driving rapidly down to Widow Cornell's cottage. Jonson was on the box as guide; Burlington, a lad of slender and handsome appearance, drove the ponies. Gretchen had been left behind, to her unalterable consternation, but Ermengarde had reserved the seat beside her. She was bent upon a daring mission, and in the height of her generous ardour she would not heed the danger to herself.

In this mood she reached the cottage. Mabel Fane was sobbing wildly on the widow's bed, her face buried in the pillow, and Mrs. Cornell was trying to comfort her.

The entrance of a richly attired lady hushed the old woman's soothing words, and she put her hand on the young girl's shoulder to attract her attention.

"Who is that?" muttered she, glancing up, and then shrinking back.

"I am Miss Thouvenal. I come to see Mabel Fane—are you Mabel Fane?"

The young girl gazed up through her tear-dimmed eyes into the quivering face of the lovely stranger, and marvelled at her agitation.

"Yes, ma'am, I am that unhappy girl; and if you are the bishop's niece, I am glad I ever had it in my power to serve such a lady, though its like to break my heart."

Ermengarde took her cold and tear-wet hands; she folded them together, and pressed them to her own bosom. She could hardly speak for tears, but her words were full of a vehement ardour which amazed the factory girl.

"They would have put you in the breach to be a shield for me!" she cried; "but it shall not be! You have been tried long enough, my child. Come with me, and I will protect you."

"With you, Miss Thouvenal? To the palace?"

"Yes, with me; and that cruel man shall never look upon your face again."

The young girl clasped her hands, and fell back with a cry of thankfulness.

"Thank Heaven!" ejaculated Mrs. Cornell. "I believe she'd have been carried off before to-morrow by that wicked gentleman. He was here half-an-hour ago; and, miss, I wonder poor Mabel was as firm as she was. She stopped her ears, and cried out to everything, 'I won't desert my bishop!' and at last he went away, vowing to get the better of his reverence, and in such a fury that we've been trembling ever since."

Ermengarde, while the old woman was telling this, held Mabel Fane's hand, and gazed at her with the deepest interest. When the young girl flushed, she flushed; when Mabel wept, so did she.

Such a compassionate lady the persecuted girl had never seen in all her life.

In a short time Mabel's little bundle was made up, at which Miss Thouvenal looked very thoughtfully; the faded shawl and summer hat were put on, then Mrs. Cornell followed them, with blessings for one and tears for the other, to the foot of the hill, where the fairy-like carriage waited.

"Where is Jonson?" demanded Ermengarde, seeing that the coachman was alone.

"He remembered a commission to the village, miss, and thought, as I could find my way home without him, that he couldn't do better than go and see about it while he was so near."

The lady took her seat, and placed the factory girl beside her.

They passed the clump of leafless trees; they left the moaning sea, the cliff-road, the jolting cross-road; they began the ascent of Bramleigh Hill, the dainty ponies trotting side by side.

Suddenly a horseman from the village overtook them, gazed searchingly in the faces of the two females, curbed his horse so violently that he rose on his haunches, and roared to the lad on the box to stop.

It was Tyrrol, from the bar of the "Dragon," in the worst of humours.

"Miss Thouvenal, and, as I live, Mabel Fane!"

"Drive on, Burlington," said Ermengarde, in the quietest of voices.

"If you do," cried Tyrrol, who was purple with rage, "I will give you the weight of this loaded whip, my man. Madam, I'm sorry to deprive you of your company, but that young woman must alight this instant."

Mabel had sat like a stone, now she clung to Ermengarde, and hid her face on her shoulder.

"Sir, take your answer from that gesture," said Ermengarde, scarcely deigning to glance in the direction of the cowardly fellow.

"Alight this instant!" repeated Tyrrol, still more violently; "or, by Heaven, I'll drag you out of your seat myself. Did you think for a moment that I would suffer myself to be baulked of you? Alight, I say!"

"Do you presume to threaten any one who is under my protection, sir?" exclaimed Ermengarde, gazing at him now in haughty astonishment. "Leave our presence! You have disgraced yourself."

With an imperial wave of the hand she dismissed him.

Tyrrol became as pale now with mortification as before he had been purple with fury. He felt utterly humiliated, despicably mean. Insensible indeed must have been the man who could bear unabashed the frown of this mysterious lady; for a few moments he was staggered, like a bull which has been stupefied by the brightness of lightning.

"Proceed, Burlington," said Ermengarde to the terrified lad on the box.

"At your peril!" cried Tyrrol, recovering himself. "Now, my dear Miss Thouvenal, I am sorry to in—"

terfere with the caprices of so enchanting a lady, but I must detain you here, if it should be until midnight, while Miss Fane makes up her mind to forsake your charming society and choose mine."

Miss Thouvenal, having dismissed him, deigned no reply; her cold, imperial profile was turned to him; her eyes were levelled straight before her, dark with displeasure. This person's presumption astonished her.

"Mr. Tyrrol," exclaimed Mabel Fane, "how can you insult Miss Thouvenal so? She has kindly taken me under her protection, and you must not expect me to leave her. Never, never! Go away, sir, and do not make me hate you."

"No fear of that, my beauty. Don't sit there looking an impostor, when you could grace so much loftier scenes."

Ermengarde looked at him with a blaze of contempt which astounded him, his bold gaze fell, and shame struggled with the vindictive feelings of his crafty heart.

"Your meaning, sir?" she demanded, calmly.

"I don't think, madam, that it's wise for you to oppose me," he muttered, sullenly; "I know too much of your history for that. Better give me my way, and have me for your friend than defy me."

Ermengarde sat among her velvet cushions like a queen. Her calm dignity was something superb; one woman in a thousand could not have displayed it.

"I do defy you," she said; "and though you should put your fancied knowledge of my misfortunes to the worst possible use, I do defy you in this matter. Bait me, embroil me in difficulties which will destroy me; then, when I have perished by a fatal blunder, which you will never know, you may call yourself my conqueror, but this dear girl will be safe."

Tyrrol laughed harshly.

Burlington seized the reins and essayed to dash on.

In a moment Tyrrol's half-savage horse was between the dappled ponies, and they were affrightedly plunging in their harness.

"Dare to move," yelled Tyrrol, "and I'll hurl you into the ditch, boy."

Mad with rage, he rode round to Mabel's side of the phaeton, and tried to drag her from her seat, across his horse.

A shriek of terror burst from the girl; and the lady sprang to her feet.

"Begone, I command you!" she exclaimed, in clarion tones, and confronted him eye to eye with flashing intrepidity.

Had another horseman!

He swooped among them like a whirlwind, his mighty form firm as a Centaur's on his steed, his yellow hair gleaming in the sun, his blazing eyes turning from face to face of the group.

'Twas the Knight of the Golden Hair.

"What in the name of Heaven does this mean, Tyrrol?"

"Nothing to you. Keep out of my affairs, Berney."

The young noble looked again; he saw a lady of surpassing loveliness standing in the carriage like Britannia in her car; she might be the queen of the nations, so majestic was her attitude.

Her brow seemed bound with burning gold—it was her own splendid hair; her eyes flashed like stars; she was dazzling.

The young man could not sit upon his horse in the presence of such majesty; he sprang to the ground and uncovered his head.

"Be off, Berney, and don't meddle here," cried Tyrrol, angrily, holding the factory girl by the wrist, and feigning to wish to speak to her.

"Sir, we entreat you to protect us from this person's violence," cried Ermengarde, surveying him with an instant confidence.

Lord Edgar bowed profoundly, and turned to the Honourable Peregrine.

"Unhand the girl, Tyrrol."

"Leave me to manage my own affairs," growled Tyrrol. "I've no wish to quarrel with you, Berney."

"Nor do I wish to force you into obedience."

Tyrrol released Mabel Fane, but it was to draw a pistol from his bosom.

Like a flash the pistol was whirling over the tops of the trees, and Berney was sitting in his saddle, smiling like a young Viking.

You could not have seen how it was done.

"Before ladies!" exclaimed he; "I'm surprised, my good fellow, at your churlishness. Come now, apologise to them, and come with me."

"I'll put that between you and my sister that you won't like," muttered Tyrrol, between his teeth.

"Mind you, I don't forget an affront."

Lord Edgar flushed and curled his splendid lip.

"You're an ill-broken hound, Tyrrol," he retorted; "be off, and mend your manners before you speak to ladies again."

"Ladies! Ha, ha! Hear that, Mabel, my dear! Find out Miss Thouvenal's antecedents before you call her a—"

Quick as lightning Tyrrol was hurled from his horse, and lying on his back among the withered bracken at the roadside.

"I beg ten thousand pardons for this unpleasant scene," murmured the knight, with an earnest look into the corulean eyes which gazed full-orbed upon him. "Make what speed you can to his lordship's palace while you are free."

Ermengarde put her hand upon her bosom, and thanked him silently. 'Twas such a queenly gesture that the knight stood uncovered until the chariot had whirled beyond his view.

The Honourable Peregrine by this time was on his feet, brushing the snow and leaves off his daintily-furred coat.

His face was livid with fury. A less brave man than Lord Edgar might have had good reason for trembling before such dumb passion. He stamped about, and glared as my lord like a basilisk.

Berney coolly led Tyrrol's roan horse up to him, and flung him the bridle.

Tyrrol grasped his loaded whip, and actually seemed to meditate an attack upon his companion. He thought better of it, though.

"You'll hear more of this!" he muttered, vaulting into his saddle.

"All right, my good fellow. I'll give you free and fair satisfaction as soon as you like."

"Look to yourself," returned the other, with an oath. "I'll be even with you for this day's work."

With a scowl of savage import, he turned off and rode out of sight, leaving Berney sitting like a young Apollo on his horse, with folded arms and dauntless front.

"Who was that brave man?" asked Ermengarde of the weeping girl by her side.

"Lord Edgar Berney, eldest son of the Earl of Lonsdale."

"A most gentle and courteous nobleman. We owe him a great service, child."

CHAPTER X.

The roses of love glad the garden of life,
Though nurtured 'mid weeds dropping pestilent dew,
Till time crops the leaves with unmerciful knife,
Or prunes them for ever in love's last adieu.

Byron.

GERALDINE TYRROL was looking over a "Book of Beauty" in the drawing-room of those charming spinsters, the Ladies De Ros.

Little Gerry's two ears were as red as the tinted shells which nestle in the white grottoes of a tropical shore; for some one had just entered, and his god-like tones were sending thrills of joy through her heart, though she was sitting almost out of sight behind Miss Amanda's huge banner-screen, which had done duty as fancy-work for ten years.

She was quite alone, too, with the simpering faces of the Court Beauties; for the "Graces"—as some ill-natured fellow had christened the three De Ros girls—had flown to welcome the cavalier, and they were clustering about him like bees.

She heard their fascinating tongues like the ebb and swell of a far-off tide, and her own heart sang a sweet little monotone of joy; for was not that mighty cavalier her dear Knight of the Golden Hair?

"Studious to-day—oh, Miss Geraldine?" asks my lord, catching sight of the little curl-covered head, and striding over the footstools.

"You may well ask that of our giddy madcap!" cries Eleanor, on one side.

"And 'tis only a book of pictures!" smiled Arabella, at the other side.

The knight peeps behind the gilded folio-cover.

"Is your visit nearly over, Miss Gerry?"

"Eh? Oh, yes, my lord; as soon as you please—whenever you please."

"If you can cut it very short, then I'll be pleased."

Geraldine, with ears like two little peonies, sits in a whirl of delightful confusion, while Miss Amanda has her turn, and relates the substance of a lecture by a Fijian to the enraptured gentleman, and then she rises to go.

"Going home, Miss Tyrrol?" asks Lord Berney, coolly; "then I'll accompany you, as I'm going your way."

"What! Already, Lord Edgar? Oh, stay and dine with us!" urges Miss Eleanor.

"He has been so interested in that new dog, Matineer, that you matched with Thunder!" cries Arabella.

"And so anxious to have another rubber with you!" sighs Amanda.

But Edgar is flint; he deserts the Graces, and goes with the madcap.

The old groom jogged fifty discreet paces behind, as intent on the clouds as if it had been Viscount Grantham; and Geraldine ambled beside her Saxon king, still dreaming her dream of delight.

"I see that you are as yet unaware of my enormities," he said, at last; "so I shall have to break them as gently as possible."

"Oh, dear!" cried Gerry; then, seeing his half-smile, she laughed at her own dismay.

"Yesterday I had the misfortune to quarrel with your brother."

"Oh, dear me!" cried Gerry again; "how could you do it?"

"I could not avoid it, Miss Geraldine. He has vowed vengeance, however, and I believe I am forbidden Vionna."

Gerry clasped her hands, then unclasped them, and looked straight before her.

"Under these circumstances," continued the young noble, in a softened voice, "I must, alas, avoid your vicinity until such time as Sir Maurice may consent to receive me on the old terms."

"Sir Maurice!" ejaculated Geraldine, in a voice of dismay.

"I met your father in Bishopstowe to-day, and he gave me to understand, in the most unequivocal language, that I was warned off the Vionna preserves. In accompanying you, in order to tell you this, I am even now poaching, I suppose."

Poor little Gerry. She loved him with all her foolish little heart, though she could not say whether he had ever thought of her for a moment; and here had come this dreadful quarrel, and she was betrothed to Viscount Grantham, and before the Tyrrols had become reconciled to the lord of her heart she would be a captive of Bathdowney, with old Grantham for a jailer.

Poor little Gerry!

But so long as he was beside her, talking in those low, confidential tones, his grand figure between her and the molten sky, like a knight on a golden banner, the miles passed like magic, the hour was full of bliss, which overleapt the pain and smothered it; like an Epicurean of old, she lived in the present, and ignored the thunderous future.

But the great gates of Vionna were reached at last, and her knight was looking into her wide brown eyes with solemn earnestness, and his tawny moustache touched her bare and trembling hand.

"Good-bye, my dear little girl, until better times."

"Yes; good-bye."

Why, bless the beautiful brown eyes, they were full of tears! What a darling. And what a spiteful dog Perry was after all.

But the beings in green, like grasshoppers, were holding the gates.

"Heaven bless you, my love!"

Had he said that? But he was gone, and the iron bars were already between her and her knight.

The discreet groom looked after the cavalier with an expression which might be construed into "That's the last of you," for he knew a thing or two, and the frowns on two faces which he had seen together lately meant more than all the smiles ever smiled by clandestine lovers.

"Sir Maurice is waiting for Miss Geraldine in the library," said the footman at the door.

Miss Geraldine's face fell very much; trouble was rife.

These library interviews were the terrors of her life; she had never undergone one of them without coming out sobered for a week; they were the convulsions of her existence, and from each she had come out a new creature.

In them she had received the announcement of her first governess; of her banishment to school; of her dreaded *début*; and, worst of all, of her engagement to Viscount Grantham.

What next!

With her heavily braided skirt over her arm, she followed the lofty footman to the dread tribunal, and was ushered in, interrupting a secret council of three.

The baronet was not alone; there was Perry, biting his nails; there was the lover with the grizzly moustache, lumbering to meet her with outstretched hand.

"Thought you'd given us the slip altogether," said the viscount, taking her hand as if it was a horse's hoof; "but you come back so rosy that I can't complain."

(He couldn't! Hateful creature! And, oh, why couldn't he, and with such cause that he'd leave her alone?)

"Sit down, Geraldine," cried her papa, who was curt and stony, like his own bust yonder by Schiller, "and listen while I tell you what we have decided in connection with you."

"No, no," deprecated the adorer, gallantly; "consult her inclinations first."

"Her inclinations!" echoed Peregrine, looking over his paper with a laugh like a snort; "the Tyrrol ladies never have any, my dear fellow; they do what they're told."

"Your wedding-day is to be four weeks from this



[THE TEMPTER.]

date," said the baronet, in about as animated a tone as if he was announcing what time the moon would rise the next night; "and I suppose I need not remind you that, this being the case, you must no longer scamper about the country with no escort beyond your groom; nor need I hint that you must see no gentleman except your betrothed, until the nuptials are celebrated."

"Tut, tut! don't make a prisoner of her," deprecated the lover again.

"She needs it," broke in Peregrine; "and if you're going to give her her head, mark my words, she'll kick over the traces. Keep a tight rein, Grantham, for she's apt to bolt."

"Pooh!" growled Sir Maurice, turning his gold pencil-case round and round in his strong white teeth; "my commands include all that. Do you perfectly understand me, my dear?"

"Yes, pa."

"Then tell the viscount how honoured you feel that he should wish to hasten the marriage, and that you will be happy to obey his desires."

She turned, with downcast eyes, to the grizzled Cupid, and a few inarticulate murmurs struggled on her lips.

"Never mind doing the polite," whispered he, in a delicate aside, in which the rough voice broke every other word; "I know exactly what you're going to say, and I answer that I'll be waiting for you without fail; so we are fair and square, my dear. He held her hand in his great broad palm, and she watched in mute fascination, his pepper-and-salt moustache brushing off the knightly kiss of sweet Sir Galahad.

"Now dress for dinner," quoth the baronet, suffering his stony mask to give place to a smile; "and do your best with your mirror, for his lordship is to be your guest."

For her Viking would be hers no more; his soul-blue eyes must look into another's; his locks, so like a Saxon earl's, must be caressed by other hands; the words must fall on other ears: "God bless you, my love!"

Oh, tears, turn to blood; drain my heart, and let me die!

But the tears only bleached a carnation in the velvet carpet; and Stephanie shook the door as if the most important duty of one's life was getting dressed for dinner.

When Miss Geraldine had finished her toilette, she obeyed the prudent hints of her maid, and went down into the garden to cool her eyes; hoping, foolish little maiden, that she'd catch a cold on her chest

and go into a rapid decline, and die at eleven o'clock on the morning of her hated wedding-day, just as the old viscount stood at the altar waiting for her.

To her intense annoyance she discovered the viscount looking at her through the terrace shrubs, with a smile on his odious face.

"What, here already, my dear? This," touching her maize-coloured satin slip, "is vastly becoming."

Yes, indeed, it was; so was the black Maltese lace which was looped like a sable cloud over a primrose horizon; so were the pansies in her brown, rippling hair; and so were the red eye-lids, and the whimpering little mouth.

"Miss Gerry," said her gallant adorer, "it strikes me that you are not pleased with me to-night."

"What makes your lordship think so?"

"Well, for one thing, you haven't said one word to me yet; and, for another, you look so glum. I believe you have been crying. Now, haven't you?"

"Don't you see the wind is cold, and isn't that enough to make one look as if one had been crying?" retorted this arrant young deceiver, with the faintest attempt at a smile.

"Why, you are shuddering with the cold, my dear! Come into the conservatory, and we'll have our little chat there."

So the pair betook themselves to the company of the flower-pots, where the soft air, the perfumed fountain, and the voluptuous flowers, awoke in the lover a strong desire to come to comfortable terms with his petulant lady-love.

"I say, Gerry, what's come over you? I thought you were a great one to chat and be merry."

"Please leave me alone, sir. I—I don't like to be teased!"

The viscount stood off, and opened his big dark eyes very wide. He was a good-natured fellow, and it came upon him like a thunderbolt.

"My darling, I'm afraid you are not pleased about the marriage being hurried," continued his lordship, as gently as his sea-captain tones would let him; "and if that's the case, we'll put it off as long as you like—for ever, if you like," he added, with a slight quiver in the firm tones.

"No, no," murmured Gerry, with one throb of approbation for him—the first that had ever visited her flinty little heart.

"But yes, my dear! If I'm disagreeable to you, I'd never force your inclinations. Never, darling!" She glanced at his downcast face. All honour to him, he showed to great advantage when not love-making.

"What do you say, Geraldine?" continued the

viscount, earnestly; "shall we drop this engagement, and say no more about it? and shall I do all I can to get your father round? Lor' bless my soul, I believe I could blarney the old gentleman over fast enough, if I could keep Peregrine out of the way."

And yet she knew that he loved her ardently, doted on her with a fond delight which she had often loathed.

Kind old Grantham! not very choice in his language, but an honest fellow, for all that! She'd never loathe him again; no, indeed, cried her generous heart.

"Don't—don't speak that way!" she cried, dashing her tears away that she might see such a hero the better; "I don't want to break the engagement—at least, I wouldn't grieve you for the world, dear friend;" the grim moustache here touched her cheek, but she did not flinch; "and if you'll give me time—give me time to love you," she sobbed, and thought of her golden-haired Sir Galahad, "I'll not be ungrateful."

"I'll do anything to save you pain. It sha'n't be until you're ready; by gad, it won't! I love you very dearly, Geraldine, and will be sadly thrown out if I'm left behind in the last round; but I don't forget that I'm an old stager; a middle-aged, awkward, and lumbering old fellow" (her own words), "and not fit to run alongside of such a little racer as you; therefore, if you find you'd rather run with some one else, give me a hint, and I'll make it as easy as a race-course to the old gentleman."

"No, no," murmured Gerry, who could be as generous as anybody where she saw good feeling; "I'll not have anything of the kind, my lord."

To Master Peregrine's amazement, he had never seen his sister and her grizzled lover such good friends as they were that evening; there was actually a tender consideration in Gerry's manner towards the viscount which he had never seen with her before. Was the minx going to nullify his little bit of spite by accepting its results so graciously as this?

It might be even so. All honour to old Grantham; "old" was a cognomen of contempt no longer.

Little Geraldine would never curl her lip at him again, for had he not proved that he was the most unselfish, the most good-natured, the gentlest old dear that she had ever seen?

Oh, golden-haired Sir Galahad! Gather your spells from round my heart, and get you gone, for it can never be.

Parted for aye are we,
Parted like mountain streams
(To be continued.)



[THE INTERVIEW.]

FIFTEEN THOUSAND POUNDS, DEAD OR ALIVE!

CHAPTER XIII.

While through the rugged path of life we go,
All mortals taste the bitter cup of woe. *Falconer.*

DAVID SANDERS, having readily obtained a gig from the head hostler of the "Pipe and Pitcher," and hired a younger hostler to drive, for the gig was to be returned to the inn unaccompanied by David, was soon rattling out of the small town of Wayburgh on the main road towards Little Ulls-burgh.

"Hurry, boy, hurry!" cried the old man, in a whirl of excitement; any rate of rapid speed appeared slow to him just then.

The boy, so called, was a sleepy-headed youth of twenty or thereabouts, with a will of his own.

That is, he was mulish.

"That 'ere 'oss be a puttin' it down—purhaps," growled the boy, and not moving a muscle.

"And perhaps you lie!" snapped the old man, snatching the reins and the whip from the hostler's hand, and forthwith lashing the horse into a gallop.

"Easy, easy, Master Davie. If so be you injures that 'ere prime animal—"

"I'll pay for him, then. Hold your tongue, Jimmy Spikes!" retorted David, lashing again.

"He'll pay for that 'ere 'oss, he will," muttered the boy, wondering where poor old Davie Sanders was to get the money. "He's just rollin' in gold and dimints, is Muster Davie, and hex to kill a 'oss ter get rid of a bit as might buy 'im a new coat. You seems in a hurry, don't ye?"

"Hold your tongue, booby! I want to think."

"He wants to think, he does; an' he cawn't do that 'ere without beatin' a Christin anamile to death. Be ye a goin' to stop at the 'Cressy Arms,' Muster Davie?"

"Hold your tongue! I know where I'm going to stop."

"He knows where he's goin' to stop, he does, vich is a blessin', for hang me ef I do, and I 'magine that 'ere 'oss would like to be told of vere he is goin' to be stopp'd."

David gave no further heed to the hostler's discontent, and Jimmy Spikes, after sundry spicy remarks about "beggars on horseback, lunatics about the size of Muster Davie S.," and divers other withering sarcasms upon "elevated poverty" in general, gradually subsided into a series of yawns, snorts, and indescribable snorings, which proved that Jimmy Spikes was asleep.

David continued to drive on rapidly for nearly an

hour, and then cautiously slackening his speed, slowly turned his horse round until the head of the animal was towards Wayburgh, whence he had been travelling.

Glancing at his companion, and seeing that he was in a profound slumber, the old man halted the horse, and after carefully tying the reins to the edge of the dash-board of the gig, and placing the whip in its socket, leaped lightly to the ground.

Then picking up a stout stick, David laid it smartly three times across the horse's haunches, and forthwith the animal started off for Wayburgh at a brisk trot, leaving the old man standing alone in the road.

We will first accompany the horse, and then return to David.

The horse soon quickened his trot into a very rapid one, the sagacious animal recognising two startling facts—one, that he was on his way back to his stables; the other, that something was snoring in the gig at his heels.

The horse soon broke into a gallop, and as at every slackening of his speed those stertorous sounds became increasingly audible, he evidently made up his mind that something beyond equine comprehension was in the gig, and that it would be better for all parties for him to arrive at the "Pipe and Pitcher" as soon as four hoofs could take him.

Having made up his mind to this determination, after many vain attempts to comprehend the mystery, the horse "spread himself," and sped along the highway at a speed that eclipsed anything ever done by a "Pipe and Pitcher" horse before.

On arriving before the inn he halted suddenly, with a spiteful jerk backward upon his haunches, and thereby Jimmy Spikes, fast asleep still, was launched into the air like a stone from a sling, whirled over once or twice, and then pitched, head down, into a large hogshedd, half-full of water.

No doubt this was accidental revenge on the part of the horse, yet he seemed to think it all right, for after a start of alarm at the rapid passage of a human body over his flanks into the butt of water, he moved away at a sober pace into the stable-yard.

The movements of the hostler were exceedingly rapid and at random for several instants after his head thumped against the bottom of the hogshedd, being spasmodic grapplings and splashings and convulsive grasps at nothing and everything, amid great terror and an idea that the world had suddenly turned into pump-water.

He soon found himself standing on his feet, gasping, half-drowned, and with no more idea of how he, Jimmy Spikes, had got into that hogshedd than a unattached goaling has of astronomy.

"I'm blowed!" said he, after a wild stare all around him, and still standing in the butt, waist deep in water. "If I ben't rite afore the blessed 'Pipe and Pitcher!' an' a standin' up to my middle in the butt of water by the pump! But vere's David Sanders? an' vere's the 'oss an' gig? an' 'eaven bless me! 'ow did I git into this?"

He remained for a moment shaking his head. The mystery was several billions of miles above his comprehension.

"Mayhap I be asleep! an' havin' a nightmare! In vich case the best way is to git out o' this tub, vich is, purhaps, a stable o' nightmares."

He scrambled for the hogshedd, and again stared in amazement around him.

"Vere's Davie Sanders? an' vere's that ere 'oss? an' vere's that ere gig? and how did I git into that ere tub? I ben't asleep now! Noa! I see wide awake. I vent to sleep in a gig, an' he vakes up hin a hogshedd vid my 'ead hunder water! That ere his vitches and vizards! Davie Sanders is a vitch."

Spying into the stable yard he saw the horse and gig, and a growling hostler beginning to unbuckle the harness.

"Ven did them git in?" demanded Jimmy Spikes, amazed, and walking gingerly around the horse and gig.

"None o' yer larks, Jimmy Spikes!" snarled the other, who had been aroused from dreams of bliss by the thrusting of the returned horse's nose into his face as he snored on a heap of hay. "None o' yer larks! Vy didn't ye vake me like a Christian? I doan't mind fun, Jimmy, as a lark, but I doan't want to be vaked in that ere vay no more!"

"Vaked! 'Spouse ye'd vaked in the vay he vas vaked!" roared Jimmy. "Iee-ted into a butt o' vater quicker nor a flash o' lightnin'! An' you a dreamin' you vas married to Dame Boxy, as hi vas! There's a vakin' up as is a vakin' up! Vere's Davie Sanders?"

"Oh, go to bed; none o' yer larks! Hi'll pay ye off—see if hi doan't," growled boots as he led the horse away.

"Hi'll think it all over in the mornin'," said Jimmy to himself as he found his way to his bed over the stable. "Vat puzzles me his—vere's Davie Sanders?"

David Sanders did not remain in the road more than a minute after the departure of the gig. He left the highway and turned into a path which led across the fields to a dense thicket, known in that neighbourhood as Hawthorn Grove. Walking rapidly, and often breaking into a run, the old man soon vanished into the deep gloom of the thicket.

More than an hour elapsed before he reappeared, accompanied by a tall figure closely wrapped in a long cloak, and wearing a fur cap, pressed far down over the brows.

Near the highway they halted, as if about to part. Little could be distinguished in the clouded moonlight of the form of the stranger, except that he was tall, erect, and held his fur-trimmed cloak up to his eyes, as if fearing recognition even from David.

"No, David," said this man, in a deep, rich tone, as they halted. "I will not at present molest Jules de Cressy—I am not in England to do that. Some day I may. But be assured that the stewardship of the estates shall be restored to you, within a few days, if you desire it."

"I do not desire it, sir," replied David, whose tone was one almost of reverence. "Never in the service of Jules de Cressy will David Sanders stoop to draw pay again. I thank you profoundly, sir, for your offer of assistance, but I do not need it."

"Ah, your friend Storme, of whom you have briefly spoken, has robbed me of the pleasure of rescuing you from poverty, my good and faithful David. Should his friendship ever halt, you know how to address me."

"Can I not move you from your determination, sir?" pleaded the old man, and referring to something that had been said in the thicket.

"No, my dear old friend, I must relieve my heart of the doubt that preys unceasingly upon it. This man, Jules de Cressy, whom I never saw but once—and years ago—must not so much as suspect that I have been so near him—not yet. I must renew my search, David. I should go mad were I to remain quiet as regards the matter of which I told you. If my first wife is alive, my second is not my wife. I loved not my first—poor lady. I devotedly love my second. I must search for my first now, since I have heard she is alive—at least until I can have no doubt that she died as we once believed. I am going back to India, David, to her whom I love so fondly; and I shall tell her of my doubts. I dared not tell her when we parted a few months ago. I am bolder now, since I have spoken with you of the lost one. Then I and my wife in India will together resolve what to do. Now farewell."

He grasped the hands of the old man, pressed them warmly, and hurried away, going back towards the thicket.

David Sanders gazed longingly after him, until the tall, soldierly figure was lost in the blackness of the thicket, and then directed his steps towards Little Ullsborough. The old man, weary in mind and body, plodded on until he had passed Cressy Park, which was not far from the village, and it was long after midnight; presently he heard a rapid step overtaking him.

He paused. Some one dimly visible in the darkness was soon sweeping past him with a tremendous stride, when David called out:

"You walk late, and in haste, my friend."

At the words the traveller halted, uttering an exclamation of surprise, and advanced towards the old man.

"What! Bomba! David Sanders here?"

It was the outlaw hurrying from his interview with Sir Jules.

"Not a word, David," said the outlaw. "You know me. That is enough. No one else near? Good. I am off. Why are you here?"

"That I am not free to tell you, my friend, nor any one. It was suddenly necessary for me to leave Wayburgh to see—to have an interview with—ahem! I have had the interview, and am on my way to Little Ullsborough to rest for a few hours. After that I shall return to the 'Pipe and Pitcher' to take charge of the children. And you?"

"I have heard of her—of my wife—she was alive a year ago in Havana. I shall find her! Hurrah! I've no time to waste. You'll hear from me when I'm on the seas. Only a year ago, David! ha! ha! alive only a year ago!"

"One question," said David, eagerly. "These children?"

"Well?"

"They—they are truly yours?"

"Ha! who disputes that they are mine?" demanded the smuggler, with a fiercer grasp on his heavy staff. "Who?"

"No one—no one now," replied David, in his quiet, warning tone. "Mark Renfrew may, hereafter."

"He dares not. If he do, let him wish he had never been born. There is an account unsettled between me and him. Tell him that—every time you see him tell him that. Let my threat hang around his brain and soul like a cancer. But I have other business on hand now. Be tender as a woman with the children, David. Here I must leave the road for the fields. Good-bye, and take good care of my babies. Heaven bless them. I leave a rich fortune for them with you, David. Farewell, old friend, till we meet again."

In another instant David was alone again, wondering.

"There are two grand hearts—each seeking for a lost wife. How strange. And with what different hopes each makes the weary search. The outlaw hopes to find the wife he seeks with arms eager to embrace him. He adores her. The soldier of India hopes—alas, that it is so!—hopes to find the grave of the wife he seeks, for he loves another, and nobly fears he has wronged his first wife in wedding the second. And there is a mystery around the two children. They may be the children of Childeric Storme—ha, I must doubt that. Ah, me, here I am at the entrance of Sanders Lane, which leads to what was once my happy home."

The habit of years had led the old man, as he reflected, from the highway into Cressy Avenue, the gates being open, and he had walked along the avenue until just at the mouth of an ornamented lane of high hedge and shrubbery, known from time immemorial as Sanders Lane. Having uttered aloud the last-quoted words, he paused.

There was a large stone bench at the entrance of the lane, a massive affair carved from a single great stone, five hundred years and more before David was born, and the weary old man sat down upon it, sighing.

"Here I sat when I was a child," he said, in a low, mournful tone. "Here used to sit my father when he was a child—and his father's father, too; ay, for ages back the Sanderses have sat and sported here in their childhood. Old friend," he added, petting the rude seat as if it heard and recognised him, "you are hard and cold, but not so hard, not so cold as the hearts of those who should love and cherish the weary old man—my son Jerome, my wife Julia. I wish my heart, old friend, was as hard and cold as you are, I would not then be shedding an old man's tears of misery upon you. The sun may shine—you feel it not. The pitiless storm may beat upon you—you care not. You are stone, you are rock. Oh, would that I were stone, or rock, or iron—or dead!"

His sorrows, his wrongs, his miseries came trooping over his bruised heart in legions with lacerating tread. He laid his withered cheek upon the rough, hard, cold stone, and sobbed bitterly.

Poor David!

Tears of childhood? Mere dew, which the warm smile of a mother quickly clears away into sparkling joy.

Tears of youth? Mere raindrops of passion, soon swept away by the breath of pleasure.

Tears of manhood? Heavy, bitter drops that scald the heart; but the heat of life's battle soon dries them, and leaves only the stain.

Tears of old age? Ah! burning, never cooling, dripping hot and acrid from brain to heart—corrosive, searing, unhealing. Such are the tears of old age—tears that eat open wounds long healed, and make them fret and bleed again.

Oh! childhood, youth, and maturity—pity, ever pity the tears of old age!

While David Sanders was shedding these tears of woe a hand was laid gently upon his bowed head, and a mild though manly voice said:

"David, my dear old friend, this is not heroic, nor the part of a man who should rely upon the goodness of Heaven for solace."

The speaker was Dr. Revil, the rector we saw as one of Lady Cressy's witnesses against Sir Jules.

"Doctor," replied the old man, quietly, and sitting erect, "it is not often that I yield to grief like this in which you have surprised me. Far be it from me to dare to draw a parallel between one so pure as our Saviour and my sinful self; but even He wept over His sorrows."

"True, my brave old friend, and from Him learn to bear that which Heaven has seen fit to place upon you. Be firm, be hopeful!"

"Hopeful!"

"Yes, hopeful, my dear friend. I have learned a great secret, which I have a right to tell you first of all men. I have learned it since the sun went down yesterday, and, in fact, within a few hours. Having learned it, I could not sleep, or rest, or remain at home for thinking of you."

"Thinking of me? Are there still those who think kindly of David Sanders?"

"Wait! To cool my fevered brain, I left the Rectory, I strolled along the streets, I wandered over here into Cressy Avenue—towards the ancient Sanders Lane; and, thank Heaven! I have stumbled upon the very one whom of all men I longed most ardently to see. Have you firmness to listen to what I have to tell you?"

The old man of a thousand woes looked up wonderingly into the benevolent face of the rector, who was far from being firm himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

There's not a day but to the man of thought
Betrays some secret that throws new reproach
On life, and makes him sick of seeing more. Young.

"HAVE I firmness to hear what, Dr. Revil?" asked David, gazing at the rector. "Good news, or bad news? But why should I ask for any tidings

except evil tidings? I have lost my home, my wife, my son, my good name. I have nothing left now to lose but my life, and that is—ha! ha!" he added, with a very sad and bitter laugh—"that is not worth keeping!"

"I think you may call my information good tidings, poor man. Nor have you lost your good name, David Sanders. There is not one of all who know you—not one, David—who believes you guilty of the charge of which you were acquitted. But, to return to what I have to tell you—are you firm?"

"As firm as the rock on which I sit."

"Then listen. I will tell it as a story, thus: A man marries a woman, and for years believes she is in truth his wife."

David as yet listens carelessly. He does not think anything more than a parable is to be told, which he must reflect upon.

"But the woman is not this man's wife, though he and she both believe they are lawfully wedded. Years before she saw him she had wedded another. When she married the second time she did not know that she had a living husband. Of this, more presently."

The rector pauses. David looks up with an eye growing wild, with a cold sweat breaking out in globules upon his forehead.

"I am attentive. Go on."

"This man, this second husband of the woman—let us call him this second husband, though by law he is not—had once a wife, who died when away from him, and who left a child—a girl!"

"Ah! it does not concern me," mutters the old man. "Emily's child was a boy."

"A child, a boy, is sent to this second husband, with the lie that it is the child of his dead wife—"

"A lie?"

"Wait! This boy is, in truth, the son of the woman whom the second husband believes to be his second wife. Do you understand?"

"You mean—good Heavens!—you cannot mean to say that Julia Stayce is not my lawful wife?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"And that Jerome is not my child?—not the child of Emily Sanders?"

"Yes, I mean that."

"You say it calmly? you—you—oh, doctor!"

"I declare it solemnly. I have seen certain proofs of what I assert. Julia Stayce, as she was called, is not your wife, for her first husband is living; she has claimed her rights as his wife. Jerome is her son by the man she now has forced to receive her as his lawful wife."

"Oh, Heaven!" cried David, sinking upon his knees, and clasping his hands, while he raised his face, pale and haggard, towards the sky. "I thank Thee for this! She is not my wife! He is not my son! Better, a thousand times better, is it to be wifeless and childless than to have such a wife, such a son!"

Again the withered cheek sank upon the stone, and again this poor old man sobbed bitterly.

But there are other tears than those of woe. There are tears of joy; and such were shed now by David Sanders.

The rector, a discreet and benevolent man, allowed him to give free vent to his emotions, himself much moved by profound and tearful sympathy, and then said:

"Rise now, my dear friend—friend of my father, too, you were. Rise, and come with me to my house, where I will explain all this in full to you. Take my arm, David; lean on me—you are weak."

"Oh—very weak!" said the old man as he leaned on the rector's strong arm and walked thus at his side.

There was an unbroken silence between them for nearly half-an-hour; and they had passed several houses in the village of Little Ullsborough, when David said:

"So she is not my wife! I have been silent thinking of that! And her husband—who is he?"

"He has acknowledged her to be his wife, in my presence, David."

"Yes? Thank Heaven! But who is he? He is welcome to her."

"He is Sir Jules de Cressy."

"Good mercy!"

"Yes. She is Lady Julia de Cressy now."

"And Jerome is—ha! ha!—then Jerome is their son?"

"Yes—here we are at my gate, David. Wait until we are in the Rectory. You are trembling—you are cold—you have a chill upon you—"

"Yes—wait! My brain whirls! Oh, that I had known this years ago. I have a better opinion of Jerome now. He was not my son."

"Yes—for years—ever since he first saw his mother, Lady Cressy, he has known that he is not your son. Come in."

"Wait! He has known that for years, and I loving him. Oh, how I loved him once—that handsome boy! No love now!—ha! ha!—no love now! He knew I was not his father. How he must have loathed my caresses. I used to see the disgust in

his proud face. Hard heart! hard heart! and he so handsome—so like in many respects, in face at times, to my dear dead Emily, whom I thought his mother. And that demon was his mother, and they knew it, and I giving him all I had in the world—love, care, home, all, everything! How they must have laughed in secret at me—at the doting, foolish old man—loving old man—blind old fool of a man! Yet how much they both resembled in their beauty my dead Emily."

"Not strange. Julia was Emily's twin sister." "Twin sister of my dead wife! She!" cried the old man, throwing up his hands like a drowning man. "But left my wife no child? Where is her child—Emily's child? That woman's child shall never be Sir Jerome de Cressy—ah! what right—" He sank in a swoon into the arms of his friend the rector, who lifted the slight frame in his strong hands and hurried into his house with it, shouting to his astonished household, and startling them from their sleep.

"James! Here! Everybody! Wife! Charles! Some of you—all of you! Quick—some one run for Dr. McMoore! Poor David Sanders; I fear he is dead. How pale and cold he is! His eyes are set! I fear this has killed the poor old man."

We must here leave David Sanders, dead or alive. If he is dead, why there is an end of his troubles. If he is alive, give him time to recover his faculties, and be assured that, if he lives, he will have a great deal more to do in this story. We must return to Cressy Hall.

On the morning after his interview with Lady Julia, Sir Jules did not rise from his uneasy pillow until near the hour of nine.

He awoke to remember that he was no longer Sir Jules the bachelor, nor Sir Jules the widower, but Sir Jules with a wife—one Lady Julia Sterlington de Cressy.

The remembrance flashed into his mind the instant he opened his eyes; in fact, an instant before he opened his eyes.

It was like the sting of a wasp on the tip of his nose. He was wide awake in the thousandth part of a second. He uttered a cry of rage, a dismal groan, and sprang from his bed as if the sheets had suddenly become red hot.

This dismal groan hurried in his swarthy-faced valet, who had been in the ante-room awaiting the waking of his master.

"Did you call, Sir Jules?" asked the valet, in English, though with a very marked Italian accent.

"What is the hour, Ravasi?" replied the baronet, yawning, for he had no desire that even his valet should deem him anything but an aristocratic idler.

"Ten minutes to nine, Sir Jules."

"Aw! I have slept profoundly, Ravasi! How is the weather? Aw!"

"Superb, Sir Jules."

"Ah! that is pleasant, as I wish to ride to-day. Anything of interest abroad—in the Hall?"

"Lady Julia de Cressy—"

"Eh!"

"Mrs. Sanders," said Ravasi, bowing, "presents her compliments, and wishes to know if Sir Jules desires to breakfast with her and Mr. Jerome this morning, *en famille*."

"Does she?" said the baronet, with a sneer, and gazing at the intelligent, shrewd, dark-faced Neapolitan. "It is very pleasant. *Au contraire*! I shall breakfast in the village—at the 'Cressy Arms'—Go order my carriage, and then return to make my toilette."

"Lady Julia de Cressy—"

"Stop!" said the baronet, with a grin. "I should be the first to give Mrs. Sanders that title. I suppose the affair is all over the Hall?"

Ravasi bowed, with a face like a mask of bronze, as was the model of a discreet valet. He said:

"Mrs. Sanders has given orders that she is to be addressed and spoken of as Lady Julia de Cressy."

"Call her madam, until I give other commands. You were saying—"

"The madam has ordered the best carriage—your favourite one, Sir Jules—to be made ready for her own use."

"Indeed! How beggars do spur when chance puts them on horseback! There, dress me—in a pair suited to the saddle, Ravasi—the latest outfit. It arrived from London yesterday. Touch my cheeks smartly, Ravasi, with the rouge—I am a little colourless this morning. Paint my beard, and see that the ends of my moustache are well waxed and curled up. A slight fierceness, you know."

Ravasi made the baronet's toilette in grand style, and then the baronet said:

"Now go and see that my horse Fieldflash and groom Stephen be ready for me in fifteen minutes. Send in coffee and a light breakfast."

Ravasi withdrew; the light breakfast was sent up, and when Sir Jules had discussed it lightly, the valet again appeared.

"Horse and groom are ready, Sir Jules."

"Very well. Now, see that all the household are assembled in the front lower hall."

"All, Sir Jules?"

"All means all when Sir Jules de Cressy says all." Ravasi departed. In ten minutes he returned.

"The entire household is in the front lower hall, Sir Jules."

"Good. Take my hat, surtout, and cane, and precede me, Ravasi."

Thus preceded, Sir Jules made his appearance in the great reception or entrance hall of the house, where were assembled all his servants, high and low, gaping with wonder. The news that the late Mrs. Sanders was the lawful wife of the baronet had spread abroad. In truth, Lady Julia had taken energetic measures to spread it.

"There is one of my servants—my late servant, I should say—that was my housekeeper—who is absent," said his lordship, in a clear, sarcastic voice, as he swept his sharp eyes about him. "I mean Mrs. Julia Sanders—that was."

He had scarcely spoken when Lady Julia, robed superbly, and bearing herself laughingly, swept into the hall from one of the doors of the grand parlours, with the air of a queen.

The amazed and admiring servants made way before her hastily.

"Really! You are tardy," said Sir Jules, mockingly, and with a sardonic bow to her. "My friends," he added, addressing the servants with the arrogant mien he knew well how to assume—in fact, his most natural bearing, "I suppose, at least, you are all my friends, as well as my servants, and if there are any who are not my friends here, the doors of Cressy Hall are open for their departure—ahem! my friends, this lady, hitherto known to you and Little Ullsborough only as Mrs. Julia Sanders, was married to me many years ago. Circumstances—of which you know nothing, and are to know nothing—separated us. Circumstances, of which you need not be informed, cause me to tell you what I do now. This lady is now Lady Julia de Cressy. As such you are to regard her. I think I have said enough—I simply add that if I hear of any gossip on the present state of affairs, I shall take measures to punish the offenders. You may now return to your duties."

"Wait!" exclaimed Lady Julia. "Sir Jules, you have said nothing of our son."

"All in good time. Really, you are asking too much."

"Speak of Jerome, Sir Jules," said Lady Julia, in a tone like a threat.

"Oh, you wish to make a scene. I wish none. My friend, Jerome Sanders, is said to be my son, but—"

He paused, for he caught the dark and glittering eye of the ex-convict Kinmore fixed warningly upon him. The haughty and handsome Jerome, too, was near Kinmore, and his blue eyes, so like his mother's, blazed up suddenly and fiercely.

"Really, that fellow Jerome is a magnificent-looking man," thought the baronet, "and perhaps he is my son. But I don't like him—he looks too like his mother."

"Proceed, Sir Jules," said Jerome, advancing with the air of a prince, and knitting his splendid brow—for indeed the young man was as handsome as Apollo. "You were about to say something of me."

"Of you? Was I? Ah, so I was. My friends, I have been informed that this young man, hitherto believed to be the son of David Sanders, is my son. As such, until proved otherwise, you are to regard him."

The haughty young face, so exquisitely moulded to express every feeling of his heart and mind, lighted up for an instant with a blaze of pride and triumph as his flashing blue eyes swept arrogantly over the faces of those who, only the day before, had dared to sneer and jibe at him. But this expression vanished from his features in a moment, and a look of cold and disdainful sternness settled upon them.

He moved his hand commandingly towards the servants, and they dispersed quickly and in wondering silence.

"My life!" thought the baronet; "if I had the training of this princely fellow, I think I might make a finished gentleman of him. Perhaps he is my son. I shall examine the proofs very carefully—very. I do not like him, but I may learn to like him more than I do Colonel Mark Renfrew. Ravasi, I have changed my mind. I will walk to the 'Cressy Arms.' See that you and Stephen, with Fieldflash, are at the inn within an hour. My hat and cane. Ah, keep your eyes about you!"

The baronet took no further notice of any one, but passed out into the broad avenue, with a quick, elastic, and graceful step, which his habit of assumed stateliness had not destroyed.

"Ah, madam," he mused, as he walked, "you have the game in your own hands at present, but time will teach you that no living thing, man, woman, or child, can tread upon my self-respect unpunished. A divorce! You expect that. I shall not gratify you in that. I detest the scandal and

the unpleasant facts a suit for divorce would set afloat. There are other ways—aha! I must consult with my London lawyers, too. First, I must breakfast at the 'Cressy Arms,' in my favourite room. This air gives me a famous appetite. Then I will call on Mrs. Hayland. Aha! that was a clever trick I played on her bearded husband! Ha! ha! He is scudding for Havana now. Having had a chat with Mrs. Hayland, I will take a trip to London. Ah—who is this coming on horseback? Oh, it is Bareffint. She said she had made a tool of him. Well, so can I, for he is a fellow, and of a tribe of fellows, who can be bought. Where was it she came from? Aiytown? Yes."

He was soon after met by the person on horseback, a lean, bony-faced gentleman, all arms and legs, very long, like a spider's. He wore a pair of large steel-bowed spectacles, behind which flamed a pair of steel-gray eyes. He had a thin, high, long nose, with broad, very prominent, and marvellously flexible nostrils, which latter gave a very disagreeable horse-look to his very ugly face.

Before meeting Sir Jules, this person halted, and, dismounting with an awkward alacrity, took off his hat. Then leading his horse by the bridle, he advanced, bowing at every step, his bushy red eyebrows in constant motion, and his eyes in a perpetual wink, his nostrils sniffing at every sentence.

"Good morning, Sir Jules. Sir Jules de Cressy, I am superlatively delighted in having the honour and pleasure of meeting you, and you looking so bright, buoyant, even brilliant. Your most humble servant, Sir Jules."

"Mr. Bareffint, good morning," replied the baronet, loftily. "It so happens that I am very glad to meet you."

"You honour me, Sir Jules. I had a suspicion that you might need—not intellectually, but perhaps professionally—my advice."

"So Little Ullsborough has heard of the unpleasant affair already. A gossiping, miserable little den, Mr. Bareffint."

"It is detestable, abominable. If it was not for the vicinity of Cressy Hall, and the present baronet, ahem! it would be in total barbarism, Sir Jules. Yes, the scandal has got abroad, sir. You must prosecute the entire population for slander, libel, calumny, and backbiting, Sir Jules. I blush for my species when I reflect upon such deplorable depravity of the human race."

Here Mr. Bareffint snorted and rolled up the whites of his eyes.

"Very well. I am pleased to hear you say so. Walk with me."

"Walk, Sir Jules, when my horse is at your service. Honour my unworthy saddle with your weight, my dear baronet, and we will exchange ideas—a robbery on my part, Sir Jules; for every idea I may chance to give you I shall obtain ten real gems of thought from you."

All this servile flattery was exceedingly pleasing to Sir Jules, though he knew the lawyer was lying vehemently. So he mounted in a stately way upon Bareffint's well-fed animal; and Bareffint strode along at his side, hat in hand, until the baronet insisted that he should cover that coarse and bristly haired object.

Thus proceeding, Sir Jules plainly stated the position of affairs at Cressy Hall, the lawyer listening with cat-like vigilance to every word.

"What has been done may be undone, Sir Jules," said Bareffint. "I had a hand in procuring the pardon of the fellow Kinmore, to favour Lady Julia—ahem! I mean Mrs. Sanders—but I had no share in anything else."

"Let that assertion pass for whatever it may be worth, Mr. Bareffint. Henceforth, you will find it more to your interest to act with me. You now have your instructions; hasten to obey them."

Sir Jules dismounted at the "Cressy Arms" inn, and went into the house, leaving Mr. Bareffint standing by the horse, outbowed the combined forces of the "Cressy Arms."

As the baronet disappeared, a horseman reined up near Bareffint, as he was in the act of swinging his lance, ungainly form into the saddle.

This horseman, a very aristocratic-looking gentleman, with a firm set of features, and a pair of keen, hard, bold black eyes, was Colonel Mark Renfrew, and a slight paleness came over the long visage of Mr. Bareffint as he recognised him.

"Is it true?" asked Renfrew, in a guarded tone.

"What, my dear colonel?" retorted the wary lawyer, in the same tone.

"That Mrs. Julia is not the wife of David Sanders, but a legal Lady Cressy, and that the young man Jerome is the son and lawful heir of Sir Jules?"

The icy exterior of Mark Renfrew, unlike the assumed stateliness of Sir Jules, was not from habit, but from nature. Therefore, to see his lips white and trembling, his eyes flashing wildly, his breathing short and thick, was to see a very rare thing. So rare, indeed, that the lawyer was surprised.

"Sir Jules fears it is all true, colonel."

"Only fears? Then he has doubts. So have I. Do you know anything about the matter?"

"Nothing; except that Sir Jules says that he fears it is true."

"Meet me at your office, Barefint, within an hour. We must discuss this news," said Renfrew, riding away with a sinking heart and a seething brain.

Mr. Barefint bowed cringingly, almost as cringingly as he had to Sir Jules, for heirs failing the baronet, Mark Renfrew was nearest heir-at-law to the baronetcy, and to a lawyer an heir-at-law is no small fish. To the astute Mr. Sharpstone Barefint an heir-at-law was game—fat, tame, and in season all the year round.

So Mr. Barefint bowed and rode away, with the reflection:

"If there were no fools in the world there'd be no lawyers; but as nine-tenths of the world are fools, lawyers must thrive. I understand the feelings of Colonel Renfrew. This sudden upstarting of an heir to the baronetcy is a sharp blow to his hopes—especially as an earldom is not far behind the baronetcy. Let them all plot, we lawyers get the best of them in the end."

With such pleasant reflections Mr. Barefint rode away to obey the secret orders of Sir Jules.

Having breakfasted to his satisfaction, the baronet emerged from the "Creasy Arms," and found his groom Stephen, his horse Fieldflash, and his valet Ravasi awaiting him.

He was soon in the saddle and on his way towards the cottage inhabited by the handsome Mrs. Hayland.

On his way he suddenly met David Sanders seated alone in the gig of the rector. David had recovered from his exhaustion and excitement, and was on his return to Wayburgh, to take charge of the smuggler's children.

This sudden meeting with the man who for years had been the supposed and acknowledged husband of Lady Julia flushed the sallow and rouged cheeks of the baronet for an instant; but he regained his composure after swallowing a curse less palatable than his recent breakfast, and with a gesture stopped David in the middle of the road.

"Mr. Sanders," he said, in a bland tone, "I am convinced that some wrong—ahem!"

"Some wrong—go on, Sir Jules," said David, coldly.

"Much wrong, Mr. Sanders—really a great deal of wrong has been done to you, and, pon my word, I am thinking of restoring you to your stewardship."

"It would be very pleasant to Lady Julia to see him so near her!" thought the baronet, chuckling with the idea.

"I reject, with respect, all your offers, Sir Jules," replied the old man, with a quiet smile. "I thank you for all your kind intentions. Permit me to say that the packet of legal documents, sent to me by Lady de Creasy, has been received by me."

"The packet of legal documents sent to you by Lady de Creasy!"

"It was placed in my hands at the Rectory. It contained all the papers and deeds by which I once conveyed all my property to my then supposed son, Jerome, and a complete renunciation of the same in favour of me. I accept the restoration—it is no more—as tardy and partial amends for years of undeserved ill-treatment. Lady de Creasy sent this note with the packet. Shall I read it to you, Sir Jules?"

Pride suggested to the baronet to say "no;" but curiosity overcame pride, as it usually does when these two powerful passions grapple.

"A very small affair to me, Mr. Sanders; but you may read it. Be pleased to remember that all property acquired by Lady Julia since her marriage with me is, by law, mine."

David raised an indignant and astonished glance to the sneering face of the avaricious and unjust baronet.

(To be continued.)

IRISH MOSS AND COD-LIVER OIL.—Irish moss is a kind of sea-weed found on several parts of the coast of Ireland, where it is called *carrageen*, and it can be obtained at almost any respectable druggist's under the English name. When dried it is picked over, and the finer and clearer parts are kept for medical use, while the darker and coarser are used for feeding pigs, for which purpose it is largely used in many places, boiled up in their ordinary food. Its qualities are somewhat similar to those of Iceland moss and isinglass, but it has the advantage over the former of being nearly tasteless, and over the latter of having a specific action on the lungs, which makes it nearly if not quite equal in value to cod-liver oil. The manner of using it is as follows:—Take about as much of the dry moss as will fill a common teacup, and steep it overnight in cold water, which removes most of the marine taste which belongs to it. In the morning boil this

just ten minutes in a quart of milk, season with any flavour that is agreeable, and when cold it will be found a strong jelly, like blanc-mange, for which, if carefully made, it may be substituted. It may be made with water as well as with milk for variety, and is particularly beneficial if taken in the morning (melted), about a teaspoonful at a time. Its action in some cases, especially when there is hemorrhage from the lungs, is wonderful. The ordinary price is about 3d. or 4d. an ounce, it is very light, and not expensive.

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER XXXI.

It was half-past eight o'clock, on the long summer evening, when Wamer, the Narrs, and the captive Dora landed from their boat at Chiswick, and took their way up to the Black Cottage in Ivy Lane.

The old care-taker was on the look out for their coming. The garden door swung open at their approach, and the dame greeted them with noisy rejoicings, being careful, however, to say nothing of her visitors of the afternoon.

Wamer and Narr, with Dora, passed on to the dwelling. Mrs. Narr lingered a moment at the garden door.

"Supper all ready?" she asked.

"Yes 'm, oh, yes 'm. And miss's room have got the bars, as you ordered, munn."

"Very well," said Mrs. Narr, with a consequential air. "You can go home then. Come round in the morning, and I'll pay you liberal for what you've done."

Dismissing the woman, she locked the wall door securely, and followed the others into the cottage.

They were waiting for her in the parlour, where lights were burning. Dora had sunk down on a sofa in the dim further corner, and was looking from out the gloom at them with bright and resolute eyes. Narr had also sat down. Wamer stood by the centre table, his face glowing with a sinister joy.

"Supper's ready," said Mrs. Narr, tossing aside her bent black bonnet and her shabby, worn, black shawl. "I'll lock the girl up in her room, and we'll go down and eat—"

"No," interrupted Wamer, impatiently. "Bring the supper in here, Mrs. Narr. And let Dora remain for the present. We must come to an understanding with her before she is taken upstairs."

Mrs. Narr acquiesced, and hastened to bring in the substantial supper of chops and ale. As they ate and drank, Mrs. Narr threatened Dora with all manner of penalties unless she yielded to their wishes.

"What do you think of that?" asked Felix.

"I think," answered Dora, "that you and your allies are well mated."

Wamer's face reddened.

"Come, come," he said authoritatively, "this attitude of yours isn't the proper one. You are totally helpless, and in our power. Your parents have threatened to starve you, to ill-treat you, and to drug you. You will be like a child in their hands, utterly unable to help yourself. I pity you from my soul, Dora. Knowing your high, proud spirit, I can understand how you must revolt against all this brutal oppression and tyranny. Let me save you from it!" and he arose and went towards her. "Let me repeat to you my offer of an honourable marriage. I will make you my honoured wife, Dora. I will give you a splendid home, wealth, honours, all the pleasures that life affords. Will you accept them at my hands?"

"They would be purchased at too dear a price," said Dora, coldly.

"You loved me once, Dora," persisted Wamer, sitting down beside her. "Is that love all dead? Can no tenderness on my part revive it?"

"You are mistaken," said Dora. "I never loved you. I was flattered a little at first by your attentions, but I did not love you. What might have been, had you acted differently after my reverse of fortune, I cannot say."

Looking into her clear, honest eyes, Wamer knew that she told the truth. She had never loved him.

"You could not expect that I should sacrifice myself for the daughter of a low forger and drunkard, could you?" he demanded, chagrined and annoyed.

"Am I any better now?" asked Dora, quickly, looking at him keenly. "Yet, just now, you offered me marriage."

Wamer bit his lips angrily.

"We will not argue," he said. "I have made you certain offers. Will you accept them?"

"No."

"You prefer suffering and oppression, then? You prefer to be forced into the marriage?"

Dora did not answer.

"You love this Sussex chawbacon, young Weir?" cried Wamer, jealously.

The girl blushed to her white forehead.

"I see," said Wamer, savagely, his soul lashed into a fury. "But, by Heaven, he shall never possess you! Mrs. Narr," he added, turning to the sullen woman who was watching him, "take you daughter upstairs and lock her up. We will try your modes of subduing her. She is to have the back chamber, is she not? I'll warrant that young Weir won't rescue her again."

Mrs. Narr arose and approached the girl.

Dora arose, retreating to the wall, her eyes flashing, her face glowing with a resolute defiance.

"Do not touch me!" she said. "I will not go with you!"

"We'll see, my lady," said Mrs. Narr. "We're three to one when it comes to that. Jack, lend us a hand!"

"You'd better give up, Miss Dora," said Jack, obeying his wife. "I ha'n't got nothing again you. Why can't you marry Mr. Wamer, and be happy?"

"Hold your tongue, Jack," cried Mrs. Narr. "If she wants to hold out, let her. She'll have to yield before I'm through with her. Seize her other arm, while I take this one. Now!"

Dora braced her slender figure against the wall, but her pretended parents seized her so roughly that she was torn from her support. She struggled with them wildly for an instant, and then gave utterance to a wild scream as they carried her towards the door.

The scream had not ceased to echo through the house, when the hall door, which Narr had omitted to lock, was flung open, and two men rushed into the hall, pausing on the parlour threshold.

The intruders were Lord Champney and Sir Graham Gallagher.

The scene that met their gaze was sufficiently striking.

In the centre of the room, two boisterous, half-intoxicated persons, having in their rude grasp a delicate, struggling girl, whose white face gleamed like marble from beneath her crown of dusky hair, and whose wild eyes shone like stars. And at a little distance, looking on, with a satisfied and exultant smile on his saturnine visage, Felix Wamer, like a head demon, presiding over the girl's destruction.

Lord Champney saw his kinsman first.

"Felix!" he ejaculated in amazement. "You here!"

"Champney!" cried Wamer, actually reeling in his overwhelming astonishment. "Champney! impossible!"

His face grew livid in its sudden pallor. He gasped for breath.

The Narrs, appalled at the strange intrusion, and the terror of their leader, released their hold on Dora.

The girl gave one wild look up into the handsome face of Lord Champney, now white and stern, and strangely rigid, and then she sprang towards him, clasping her hands, and crying:

"Save me! Oh, save me!"

She would have fallen at Lord Champney's feet, but that he caught her in his arms.

"Save you from what?" he asked, sternly.

"From them!" cried Dora, pointing to the Narrs.

"From him!"

And she indicated Wamer.

"From him?" repeated Lord Champney. "What has he done to you?"

"He is going to shut me up, to compel me to marry him! He is my bitterest enemy. He sets those Narrs on against me—"

"He is her persecutor of whom I told you, my lord," said Sir Graham Gallagher, comprehending the matter at once.

A flood of light poured in upon Lord Champney's amazed and half-incredulous soul. His countenance darkened and grew sterner still as he gazed upon Wamer, who, unable to command himself, cowered before him in all the agony of detected guilt.

"I see," said his lordship, slowly, a look in his gloomy eyes before which Wamer quailed anew.

"This is the young lady you know in Sussex, Felix? This is the young lady you wanted to marry? Answer. I command you!"

Wamer was a coward at heart, as one might expect an oppressor of women to be. He dared not lie, or refuse to answer, while those keen, commanding eyes were upon him. He gasped out an affirmative response.

"You insulted her with an infamous proposal, when you discovered her with these people in London? And when you discovered from them, or otherwise, her actual identity, you determined to force her to marry you? Is this not so? Speak!"

The cowardly villain's looks were sufficient answer, without his gesture of assent.

"Viper!" said Lord Champney, with a stern and

awful scorn. "You have stung the hand that cherished you! I thought you good and true. But, like all the world, you are base and false, seeking your own ends!"

He turned from the humbled villain to the girl clinging to him. He put her gently from him at arm's length, and looked into her face.

And as he looked, the sternness melted from his noble visage. The gloom in his eyes lightened. A strange and infinite tenderness quivered about his firm mouth, and beamed from every feature.

That pure and innocent face, with its exquisite beauty, its eyes like dark stars, its tender mouth quivering in a wild and pathetic appeal, all touched his inmost soul. Just such a face as this, pure, sweet, and tender, he had loved to think his child would have worn had she lived. It looked to him at that moment like the face of an angel.

The father's instinct within him asserted itself, and cried out for the girl's recognition. Not yet, however, did he yield to it.

He gently pushed up her sleeve. There was the mark on her arm which he so well remembered—the tiny scarlet cross.

At sight of that birthmark, his last doubt—if he still had any—vanished.

He caught the wondering girl to his bosom, raining kisses and tears on her pale, astonished face, and calling her by a thousand tender names in his transports of delight.

"My child! my child!" he whispered, as she lay trembling against his breast. "You are my own daughter—my little Barbara, whom I thought dead! Heaven has had pity on me at last! Some brightness has come to my desolate life!"

Dora's heart throbbed wildly.

"Am I not, then, the daughter of the Narrs?" she cried. "Am I really your daughter?"

"Yes, darling, yes, you are really mine! You were given to Mrs. Narr to nurse by my good friend and physician, Sir Graham Gallagher. And she has kept you from me all these years!"

"And you are Lord Champney, Mr. Wamer's kinsman?" questioned the girl, incredulously.

"Yes," said Sir Graham Gallagher, beaming with sympathy. "He is Lord Champney. I recognised you last night by your birthmark, as the supposed dead heiress. I went to Lord Champney to-day and told him of my discovery, and brought him home with me. Your fate has changed since last night, my little Lady Barbara! You are no longer homeless and friendless, but the bearer of an ancient and honourable name, and the heiress of great wealth."

"Best of all is the honourable name and the love of parents," said Dora, softly, her eyes brimming over with tears.

Lord Champney caressed her gently. His heart was too full for words.

By this time the Narrs were thoroughly and abjectly terrified. The cowardice and fear of Wamer had had its due effect, and Sir Graham's remark had plunged them into deeper depths of terror.

"It's all up with us, old woman!" said Jack Narr, in a howling voice. "I always told you how it would end. Here 'tis, transportation for life, for keeping the baby that didn't belong to us. Oh, my lord, let us off, and we'll own to the truth! We will—we will! It was the old woman did it!"

"Jack told me to," cried Mrs. Narr, turning on her spouse furiously. "Our baby died just as we wanted to leave our farm, and Jack and I said we'd let our child be buried as my lord's, and we'd keep my lord's for a speculation. We thought then of getting a hundred pounds or so, after a time, for giving it up. We did mean to give her up some time to you, my lord. We would have done it before this, only Wamer there wanted to marry her, and he offered us five hundred pounds a year if we'd bring about the marriage. I'll take my oath that Dora's your child, my lord, but don't punish us. If you do," she added, threateningly, "we'll tell upon your kinsman, Mr. Wamer, and that won't be very pleasant to you."

In the midst of these confessions and recriminations, the hall door again opened, and two men came gliding stealthily in. One of these was the slouchingly dressed man Sir Graham Gallagher had remarked at the nearest corner in the afternoon, and pronounced to be a detective.

These men glided past Lord Champney and Sir Graham into the little parlour, and the detective went up to Jack Narr and laid his hand on his shoulder heavily, exclaiming:

"John Narr, you are my prisoner, on a charge of forgery. You must come with us."

Jack uttered a howl of despair, but that did not prevent the officer from fastening upon his wrists a pair of handcuffs.

"Let us go," said Lord Champney. "This is no place for my daughter. My carriage is waiting in the lane. And the key of the garden door is on the table."

Sir Graham took up the key, and Lord Champney led the way from the house, with Dora clinging to his arm.

Wamer stole out after them, his face black with malignant passions.

As they paused at the gate to fit the key to the lock, Wamer came up to them, and said, hissing:

"It's all up with me, Champney, but you must allow I played the game well. If this infernal doctor hadn't interfered, I should have married the girl, and brought her to you as my wife and your daughter. But there are two bitter drops in your cup of joy. One is, that you have no son, I shall be heir to your title. The other is, that if you have found a lovely daughter, you have a faithless wife. I wish you joy of her."

The door being open by this time, Wamer passed out first, uttering, as he went, the mocking laugh of a tortured yet exultant demon.

The Champney carriage was in waiting down the lane. His lordship handed Dora into it, and then paused on the step, giving his hand to the court physician.

"We part here to-night, Sir Graham," he said. "I must make all haste home. Come and see me to-morrow. Heaven bless you for all your friendly kindness to me. I shall never forget it."

They clasped hands, and the doctor then turned and walked towards his home.

Lord Champney entered the barouche, and gave the coachman the order: "Home." Then he drew his newly found daughter close beside him, her head against his shoulder, and tears of mingled joy and despair fell thickly among her dusky tresses.

His cup of joy seemed full, and yet, as Wamer had said, there was in it a dash of bitterness that almost spoiled the draught.

He had found a daughter—more lovely than he would have dared to picture her—but what was a daughter's love, compared to that of the wife he so madly worshipped?

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE hour was growing late, and the long twilight, which in England often lingers till near midnight, was yielding slowly to the deeper shadows of the night, when the Champney carriage entered at the lodge gates of Champney Mere, and bowed up the long avenue towards the mansion.

Dora looked out eagerly, scanning the long house front with questioning eyes.

The house was brilliantly lighted in its eastern portion, according to the family custom. Lights gleamed from the long, uncurtained windows of the drawing-room and shone out brightly from the chambers above—the chambers of the Lady Barbara.

Poor little Dora began to shrink and tremble at the prospect of the coming meeting.

She drew nearer to Lord Champney, with shy, deprecating movement, and looked up at him with pleading eyes.

"Oh, papa!" she whispered, the old familiar name by which she had called Mr. Chessom coming unconsciously to her lips. "I begin to be afraid. She—she doesn't know I am coming?"

Lord Champney regarded her with an overflowing tenderness.

"No, darling," he answered. "She thinks you dead, as she has mourned for you all these years. I did not dare impart my hopes to her before going from home to-day, lest I should fail to find you. I wanted to spare her the anguish of suspense. But here we are. Calm yourself, my child. We are at home."

The carriage rolled into the lighted porch, and Lord Champney assisted Dora to alight. Then, as the vehicle went round to the stables, his lordship led her up the steps, saying:

"Welcome home, my little Lady Barbara. Welcome to our home and our hearts!"

He lifted her lightly over the threshold, and conducted her into the grand drawing-room, whose splendour astonished wide-eyed Dora.

There was no one in the room. Dora sat down in a yellow satin-covered chair, while Lord Champney touched the bell with a vigorous hand.

Mrs. Bisset, the housekeeper, presently made her appearance.

"Has Lady Champney retired?" inquired his lordship. "If so, be kind enough to request her presence in the drawing-room at once!"

Mrs. Bisset bent an inquiring and admiring glance at the lovely young stranger, and replied:

"My lady has gone out for a stroll by the Mere, my lord. She went out only a few minutes ago, being restless, my lord."

His lordship caught his breath sharply.

"Very well, Bisset," he said. "You may go. I will seek her ladyship myself."

Mrs. Bisset retired, courtesying.

Dora was quite amazed at the darkly stern ex-

pression of her father's face, as he turned to her with a forced and ghastly smile, and said:

"Remain here, little Barbara, till I return. I am going for your mother!"

Dora was awed and silent.

Lord Champney went to the window, pushed it up, and leaped lightly out upon the terrace.

The next moment he was moving swiftly in the direction of the Mere.

It would be hard to analyse the emotions surging in his soul as he stalked gloomily towards the thick shadows of the alder trees fringing the banks of the tiny lake. Rage, jealousy, hatred and despair alternated in claiming ascendancy. For the moment he forgot his joy at the recovery of his daughter in his anguish at the supposed infidelity of his wife.

Remembering the events of the preceding night, he expected to find her holding a tryst with Colonel Effingham.

He was not, therefore, greatly astonished when he heard voices issuing from a clump of low alders—voices which he recognised as those of his wife and the detested colonel.

His breath came hard and quick. His eyes gleamed with a savage lustre. He crept towards the clump of alders with swift stealthiness, and paused there amid the shadows.

"She has always protested to me her innocence," he thought, "and now I will convict her of falsehood by her own mouth. I will hear what they have to say, and then rush out and kill them both."

He grated his teeth and clenched his hands. And thus he waited.

Presently a voice came to his ears—the voice of the Lady Barbara. She was so near to him that he could almost reach out his hand and grasp her garments. He could see her through the rift in the branches, and he parted the leaves with his clenched hand and looked at her.

She was standing on the bank of the Mere, fair, and stately, and beautiful. She was attired in some costly dress of the daintiest rose hue, in which she looked more than ever bewitching. Jewels gleamed on her arms and neck, and among the tresses of her pale gold hair. Her husband's heart throbbed wildly at sight of her in her grand and glorious beauty; yet even he, in all his jealous madness, saw that she had not the look of one who is enjoying a meeting with a favoured lover.

She had not the coy smile, the gracious look, or the tender, loving air he expected to see. Instead, she was very pale and grave, and in her violet eyes was a stern look her husband had seldom seen there.

But the man at her side, joyful, smiling, and evilly exultant—he was Colonel Effingham.

"Yes, I am here to keep my appointment with you, Colonel Effingham," said the Lady Barbara, in a stern, cold voice. "Last night you came to the drawing-room window and gave me a note commanding me to meet you here, on peril of your fighting a duel with Lord Champney. I have come."

She folded her white arms, on which bracelets gleamed like drops of light, and confronted him with a cold, calm scorn.

"But this isn't the kind of meeting I demanded," said Effingham, coming a step nearer to her. "We've the place to ourselves, my royal Barbara. Champney's gone off for a day or two. I got the news from one of the servants. You are free to unbend a little from that queenly hauteur. I love you madly, desperately—"

"Stop!" said the insulted lady, haughtily. "You must not address me in that style. I am an honourable woman, Colonel Effingham, whom you have basely traduced and maligned. Did I ever address you a single line, save the letter I wrote you from Saltair, telling you of my husband's intention to provoke a duel with you? And that I did for his sake, knowing you to be a notorious and skilful duellist. Did I ever encourage your loose, some attentions by so much as a word or look? You know I never did. And yet you have persecuted me, annoyed me, and written such shameful letters to me that, if Lord Champney had seen them, he would have deemed me a faithless wife, a dishonoured woman. You have done your vile best to compromise me—"

"And have I not succeeded?" demanded Effingham, sneeringly. "That jealous Champney believes you false and wicked. You might as well yield to my persecutions. I swear I will never stop in them until you become mine, or Champney seeks a divorce. You see what you drive me to, Barbara. It is all your own fault. I love you, and Champney does not. You have always been as scornful to me as you are now—the haughtiest, coldest, proudest of women. You have always repulsed me, and pretended to hate and loathe me. And all from some cold prudishness about staining your name, I think. You can't love the husband who deserted you for seventeen years—the husband who has come back

only to imbitter your life with jealousies? I would be your slave, Barbara—"

"Stop!" again commanded Lady Champney, sternly. "I did not come out here to-night to hear your vile protestations of love. I came out to compel you to do me justice. Will you write a letter to my lord, clearing my name from all your false and foul aspersions? Will you clear me in my husband's eyes?"

"Never!" said Effingham, with a sneer.

"You will not?" demanded the insulted lady, sternly. "Think again."

"I will not."

"I cannot go to my husband in this matter," said the Lady Barbara, her eyes glittering like a polished sword in the sunlight, "because he is too fiery and hot-headed. Moreover, you have persuaded him of my guiltiness of wrong. I can go to no one else. Lord Champney's wife must not depend upon strange gentlemen for defenders. I have, therefore, resolved to take the law in my own hands, and to punish you myself."

"With kisses?" asked Effingham, mockingly.

The Lady Barbara looked at him from head to foot. He had gotten himself up in the dandy style he affected for the interview. His burly figure was encased in dainty dove-coloured trousers and black coat. A gold chain strayed over his white waistcoat. He wore a diamond pin and jewelled shirt-studs, as well as a lady's ring on his finger.

"Well?" questioned the villain, still with that mocking sneer.

"You still refuse to do me justice?"

"The only way I know of to do you justice is to love you."

A scarlet flush stained the lady's cheek. It died out, leaving her pale as marble.

The next moment she gave utterance to a low cry, thrice repeated.

In response to the signal—for such it was—three of the burliest men servants of the Mere, with Leffles, the house-steward, at their head, sprang out from the shadows nearby, and bounded upon the scene.

"What does this mean?" ejaculated the burly colonel, wheeling, and facing the new-comers.

"Leffles, do your duty!" commanded the Lady Barbara, sternly.

The men, sturdy, rough-armed fellows, hurled themselves upon the startled, fuming Effingham.

He struggled fiercely, but was soon obliged to yield to superior force. The men took him prisoner. Leffles bound him.

"This is a gross indignity—a shameless outrage!" gasped the villain, fairly foaming. "I will be revenged for this—"

"Will you yield to my demand; or must I go farther?" asked the Lady Barbara, calmly.

"Yield—never!"

Lady Champney made a gesture to Leffles.

The men instantly dragged their prisoner to the Mere. Before he fairly comprehended what was to be done with him, he was plunged completely under the waters.

"My lady, shall I let him stay under half-an-hour to soak the badness out of him?" asked the house-steward, who only knew that Effingham had insulted her ladyship, and who resented the outrage accordingly.

"No; you may bring his head up now," said the Lady Barbara.

Leffles drew up the colonel's head with a vindictive tweak at his scented locks.

"It's took the starch out of him, my lady," said the house-steward, contemplating the wilted dandy with great satisfaction.

Effingham gasped like a drowning man.

"Are you prepared to yield now?" asked the lady, sternly.

"No—curse you!"

The Lady Barbara motioned again to Leffles. The evil, vengeful face went under water again.

Presently, at the command of her ladyship, it again emerged, Leffles taking a savage pleasure in repeating his vindictive pulls at his victim's hair and long moustache.

"Have you thought better of my demands?" asked the Lady Barbara. "If you have not, your punishment will be repeated until you do."

Effingham gasped and spluttered, mingling with these exercises that of muttering, chokingly and in single words, with great pauses between, a succession of frightful oaths and curses.

Lady Barbara stood on the bank, as stern as any Nemesis.

He comprehended that she meant what she said. Yet, such was his pride and obstinacy, that he would not yield until he had been ducked the third time, and brought up chilled to the bone and more dead than alive.

Then, at last, he signified that he would obey her.

He was dragged to the bank—a pitiful object, of which the most insane man would have scorned to be jealous.

And here he gasped out a full and complete confession of her purity, her wifely honour, her scorn of him, and his ceaseless persecutions of her.

"What led you to act in this manner?" inquired her ladyship, when he had sobbed out, in rage and shame, the whole miserable story.

"It was Felix Wamer set me on. He told me that you did not love Champney, but that you did love me. Curse him! I'll be revenged on him yet! He wanted to keep you and Champney apart. He meant to be heir to the title and estates. He has schemed to that end ever since your marriage, for all he seems so frank and honest. Curse him! I'll never rest until I've taken my revenge on him for this humiliation!"

"It was Wamer, then, who is at the bottom of all this trouble?"

"Yes; and it was he who has continually stirred up Champney's mind against you."

"You are willing to make a written confession similar in effect to this verbal one?" inquired Lady Champney.

At this moment the branches stirred, and Lord Champney emerged from the gloom. He had witnessed the whole scene from his concealment, too amazed to stir, and now came forward with a pale, stern, and strangely agitated face.

"It does not matter about the written confession," he said. "I have heard all."

"All!" the wife echoed.

"All. Leffles, unbind that hound and let him sneak off. You will see, my brave fellows, that he quits the premises as quickly as possible. Barbara," he added, "let us go to the house."

He gave her his arm. They walked slowly towards the mansion.

A few steps from the porch, in the shadow of a clump of bushes, Lord Champney paused, and turned to his wife, with a great agitation and streaming eyes.

"Barbara, my wronged wife, can you forgive me?" he pleaded, in a tone that would have stirred any woman's heart, however justly offended that woman might be. "I know you as you are, pure, and stainless, and honourable. I must have felt you so all the time, or I could not have continued so to love you. Barbara, my wife, take me back!"

There were answering tears in the wife's violet eyes. She felt that in her husband's present anguish, and knowledge of her, all his old suspicions were swept away for ever, and that a perfect trust had arisen in his heart, an enduring faith, that nothing could ever assail.

All the old wifely love for him came back to her heart. A great emotion thrilled her being.

Her husband mistook her silence for that of aversion.

"Barbara," he said to her, softly, "you told me, weeks ago, at Saltair, that there was a grave between us. You said that when I could bring back your lost child you would forgive me. I have brought her!"

"Sidney!" cried the wife, in a shocked voice.

"Listen, Barbara. You know that Sir Graham Gallagher, our old doctor, was here to day. He told me—can you bear the glorious news?—that our child did not die, as was said. He told me that I had buried a daughter of the Narra, and that our child still lived! He saw her last night. She has the mark on her arm of which I told you years ago. She lived with the Narra as their daughter. I went with the doctor to see these Narra, and the whole truth came out. The girl is our daughter. Felix Wamer was there, and has known the fact for some time. He meant to marry her. I saw the young girl—"

"Oh, Heaven!" breathed the mother. "You saw her! She is ours—our own? You are not deceiving me?"

"Do you think I would deceive you in this thing, Barbara? The child is our own. I have a hundred proofs of the fact!"

The Lady Barbara shook like a leaf.

"Where is she?" she panted.

"Here, in the drawing-room!"

The husband led the trembling mother into the brilliant drawing-room.

A little airy vision, with eyes like dusky stars, a head framed about with tiny dusky rings of hair, a sweet, spiritual face, and a lovely, wistful mouth, sprang up from the depths of the big yellow chair, and came forward to meet them.

"Mamma! oh, mamma!" cried this radiant little vision, after one wild glance into the lady's violet eyes, as she sprang into the Lady Barbara's outstretched arms.

For one wild minute they remained thus, clasped in the closest, sweetest, most tender embrace, and then the wife looked up from the fair face pillowed on her bosom, with a countenance all joy and smiles

and tears, and stretched out her arms to her expectant husband.

"Take us both, Sidney!" she whispered. "You have got us both back together!"

The scene that followed is too sacred for description. It is enough to say that all distrust, all coldness, all resentment fled before the tenderness of that glorious reunion.

The next day—it was late in the afternoon—a fly came bowling up the drive at Champney Mere, and presently a young man alighted at the door, inquiring for the young Lady Barbara Champney.

This young man was our hero, young Mr. Chessom. He was pale and sad and anxious, yet there was a brave smile on his face, and a brave light in his eyes, that showed how unfeignedly he rejoiced in Dora's happiness. He had seen Sir Graham Gallagher that morning, and had heard the whole story of Dora's birth and restoration to her parents.

He was shown into the drawing-room, and left to himself. A minute later, Dora came dancing in, gay and bright and bewitching, as in the old days at Chessom Grange.

Noel's eyes filled at sight of her.

"Lady Barbara," he said, gently, taking her little hand in his, "I could not go back to Sussex without first coming to congratulate you on your deserved happiness. You are safe at last, Dora—Lady Barbara, I mean—"

Dora's lip quivered.

"Why, what's the matter with you, Noel?" she asked, naively. "Have I offended you? Papa asked Sir Graham to tell you of all that's happened, and I was just writing to you in mamma's room when the servant announced you!"

"I am not offended, Lady Barbara," responded the young man, with an answering quiver of the lips, and a show of emotion he vainly tried to repress. "But there is a wide gulf between the Lady Barbara Champney and Noel Weir—"

"As much as there was between Mr. Weir and Dora Narr?" asked the girl, archly.

"A thousand times more. Lord Champney is a nobleman, and I am but a plain country gentleman—"

"But a nobleman's greatest boast is, that he is a gentleman!" said the little Lady Barbara.

A pained smile flitted over the young man's face.

"Lord Champney, your father, would see the difference, Lady Barbara," he said, still with that sad gentleness. "I have come to say good-bye to you. We shall never, in all probability, meet again. But, wherever you are, whoever you marry, you will always have my best and kindest wishes. There will always be one who will rejoice in all your social successes and prosperity!"

He held out his hand to her to say farewell.

Dora's bright face clouded.

"You have ceased to love me, then?" she said.

"Ceased to love you! Oh, Dora! Heaven knows how dear you are to me! The most precious treasure a man ever worshipped and lost! Forgive me. Heaven bless you, Lady Barbara—"

But the young Lady Barbara crept nearer to him—within the shelter of his arm.

"If you love me, why do you leave me?" she asked, simply. "I—I— Oh, you great stupid darling!" she added, laughing and crying in a breath, "must I tell you I love you?" and her voice sank to a whisper. "I told papa and mamma all about you; and they said that—that they would like to know you—and that they didn't care for titles—but for honesty and truth and goodness—"

The little stammerer paused, for the young man caught her in his arms.

It seemed to him that Heaven had opened to him! That moment held for him the supremest joy of his life!

And when Lord and Lady Champney came down and invited him to stay at the Mere on a week's visit, in order to get acquainted all around, his cup of happiness fairly overflowed.

A week later, on the day Noel went back to Weir Hall, came the news that Colonel Effingham and Felix Wamer had fought a duel on the island of Jersey, and that the latter had been killed outright. Effingham had been severely wounded, and was taken to a village hotel, where his wounds were cared for by the village surgeon. The skill of the practitioner proved inadequate—gangrene set in—and Effingham expired, after several days of horrible tortments.

Jack Narr had his trial in due time, and was transported for his crime of forgery. Mrs. Narr followed him to Australia to await the expiration of his sentence, and to meanwhile prey upon the community, having taken up the various modes of earning a living by her wits.

In September, Willard Ames and Ada Gower, Lady Champney's niece, were wedded at St. George's, Hanover Square. The most remarked guests among

the gay assemblage were Lord and Lady Champney and their lovely daughter, of whom, it was remarked, their parents were so proud.

When June had come again—June with its flowers and sunshine and sweetness—the June of the present year, 1870, there was a happy bridal at the little parish church near Champney Mere.

The bride was the youthful Lady Barbara; the bridegroom, Noel Weir. Lord Champney, proud and happy, gave the bride away. Lady Champney, a little pale from recent illness, was radiantly beautiful and radiantly happy. And well she might be. The sundered hearts were united—the long war of the household ended; and the “heart of her husband safely trusted in her!” The young girl kneeling in bridal white before the altar, though dearer than ever, had found a rival in her mother’s heart; for, back at the Mere, in an upper chamber, the little two months’ old heir of Lord Champney was lying—the tiny heir, which had already become the idol of Lord Champney’s heart.

“After the night comes the morning!” the happy wife said to herself, softly, as the young Lady Barbara Weir, beautiful with blushes, stood up to receive the congratulations of her friends.

The parents came first, of course; then happy wee Aunt Tiny from Holly Cottage, with a prodigious train to her dress to make her look taller; then a host of friends and fashionable acquaintances.

And the young Lady Barbara—beautiful Dora—leaned on the arm of her proud young bridegroom, and thought, with him and with her parents, that the long and sunny morning had fully dawned at last!

THE END.

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Roy was not demonstrative. He never of his own accord so much as took Georgie’s hand in his own, or laid a finger on her in the presence of others. How he demeaned himself towards her when they were alone Edna did not know, but seeing him always so quiet and reserved, she had never realised that he was engaged as fully as she did when she saw it in his own handwriting; and two burning tears rolled down her cheek and were impatiently dashed away as she read:

“And now, my little sister, I have something to communicate which may surprise you, but which I hope will please you, inasmuch as I trust it may have a direct bearing upon your future. I am engaged to be married to Miss Georgie Burton, who was so kind to you and poor Charlie—”

“Yes, very kind to me!” Edna said, bitterly, while two more tears came dropping from her eyelids.

“Miss Burton is very nice, of course, and very beautiful—the most beautiful woman I think that I have ever met, unless it be a Miss Overton, who is here as companion for mother.”

Edna’s face and neck were scarlet now, and there was a throb of ecstasy in her heart as she read on:

“This Miss Overton, who is not at all like Georgie, is still quite as beautiful, I think, and both mother and myself like her immensely. She is nineteen, I believe, but a wee little creature, with the roundest, saniciest eyes, the softest golden-brown hair rippling all over her head, and the sweetest, most innocent face, while her smile is something wonderful. Of course I am not in love with her, she seems so much a child, but sometimes I want to take her in my arms, and hug her as I would a pet kitten.”

“A pretty way to talk about me, and he engaged to Miss Burton,” Edna said, two delicious tears this time rolling down her face and falling upon the letter, which continued:

“Maude Sommerton, whom I wish you knew, calls her Dotty, or little Dot, but to myself I call her ‘Brownie,’ her eyes and hair are such a pretty brown, just tinged with golden, and her complexion, though smooth, and soft, and very bright, is still a little brownish. Georgie is dark, with great black eyes and raven hair, as you will remember.”

“I should say it was time he came back to his Georgie and let me alone,” Edna said again, but not impatiently.

She would have been well satisfied to have read Roy’s praises of herself for the entire day, and felt a little annoyed that nothing more was said of Miss Overton, Roy plunging next into his cherished plan of having his sister come home as soon as Georgie came and begging her to tell him where she was, so that he might come for her himself.

“Mother wants you, and surely, for Charlie’s sake, you will heed her wishes.”

“Yes, greatly she wants me, if Miss Burton is to be believed,” Edna said. “You and your fiancé

don’t quite agree on that point. She may like me as Miss Overton, with no claim upon her, when as her daughter-in-law, she would hate and despise me. But she’ll never have the opportunity, never! I shall not let them know that Edna was over here, and my easier way is not to answer Roy’s letter, now or ever. I cannot tell him I am rejoiced at his engagement, for I am not. I don’t like her—I never shall like her—I almost think I hate her, or should if it were not so very wicked,” and Edna’s boot-heels dug into the carpet as she gave vent to this amiable outburst.

There was more of Roy’s letter, but it was all about Edna’s coming to Leighton in the spring, when he expected to be married. Not a word more of Georgie, and not a word of Miss Overton. But Edna had read enough to make her very happy. Roy had said she was very beautiful; Roy wanted to hug her as he would a kitten; Roy called her “Brownie” to himself. Surely this was sufficient cause for happiness, even though his marriage with another were fixed for the ensuing spring. It was a long time till then, and she had a perfect right to be happy, and would enjoy the present without thinking of the future, when Leighton could no longer be her home.

This was Edna’s conclusion, and, folding up Roy’s letter, she went to Mrs. Churchill with so bright a look beaming in her face that it must have communicated itself to her manner, for Mrs. Churchill said to her:

“You seem very happy this morning. You must have had good news in the letter Russell brought.”

“Yes; very good news. At least, a part of it was,” Edna replied, her pulse throbbing a little regretfully as she remembered having seen, in Roy’s own handwriting, that he was pledged to another—he who called her “Brownie” to himself, and who had been so very kind to her, and who, once, when she was standing beside him, laid his hand upon her hair, and said:

“What a little creature you are! One could toss you in one’s arms as easily as one could a child.”

“Suppose you try,” said a smooth, even-toned voice just behind him.

And the next moment Georgie appeared in view, her black eyes flashing, but her manner very composed and quiet.

After that Roy did not touch Edna’s hair again, or talk of tossing her in his arms. Whatever it was which Georgie said to him with regard to Miss Overton—and she did say something—it availed to put a restraint upon his manner, and caused him to keep to himself any wishes he might have with regard to Brownie. He called her that in secret, and watched her when she went out and when she came in, and listened to her voice, either reading to his mother, as she did every morning, or singing to her, as she did every evening, until there would, at times, come over him such a feeling of restlessness—a yearning for something he could not define—that he would rush out into the open air, or, mounting his swift-footed steed, ride for miles down the river road, until the fever in his veins was abated, when he would return to Leighton, and, if Georgie was there, sit dutifully by her, and try to behave as an engaged man ought to do, and get up a little enthusiasm for his bride-elect. But, whether he held Georgie’s white, jewelled hand in his, as he sometimes did, or felt her breath upon his cheek, as she leaned her beautiful head upon his breast in one of her gushing moods, he never felt a glow of feeling like that which throbbled through every vein did “Brownie’s” soft, dimpled hands by any chance come in contact with so much as his coat-sleeve, or “Brownie’s” dress sweep against his feet when he was walking with her.

He did not ask himself whither all this was tending. He did not reason at all. He was engaged to Georgie; he fully intended to keep his engagement; he loved her, of course, as he believed, but that did not prevent his being very happy in Miss Overton’s society; and he was happy in it, but naturally enough charged some of his present content to the fact of his being at last settled and fixed in life. But for Edna he would have tired of Georgie tenfold more than he did now, and so she was rather a help than a hindrance to that lady, who, nevertheless, disliked her thoroughly, and under a mask of friendship never let pass an opportunity for wounding her.

During all this time no answer had come from Edna to Roy, who wrote again and again with similar success, until he grew desperate, and resolved upon a second visit to Aunt Letty Pepper, hoping by bribe or threat to obtain some clue to Edna’s whereabouts. This intention he communicated by letter to the worthy spinster, who replied:

“Don’t, for goodness’ sake, come here again on that business, and do let Edna alone. She, nor no other woman, is worth the powder you are wasting on her. If she don’t answer your letter, and tell

you she’s in the seventh heaven because of your engagement, it’s pretty likely she ain’t thrown off her balance with joy by it. She didn’t fancy that woman with a boy’s name none too well when she first saw her, and if I may speak the truth, as I shall if I speak at all, it was what she overheard that person say to her brother about your and your mother’s opinion of poor girls like her that kept her from going to Leighton with the body, and has kept her away from there since, and it’s no ways likely she’ll ever go now so long as the thing with the boy’s name is there as mistress. So just let her alone, and it will work itself out. Any way, don’t bother me with so many letters.

“Yours to command,

“LETITIA AMANDA PEPPER.”

It was Roy’s duty to feel indignant towards one who called his wife-elect, “that thing with the boy’s name,” and he made himself believe he was, and styled her a very rude, impertinent woman, and then he thought over what she had said about Edna’s disapproval of the match, and of Georgie’s previous treatment of her, and that hurt him far worse than Miss Pepper’s calling his betrothed “that thing with the boy’s name.”

What could Georgie have done to inspire Edna with so deep-rooted a dislike, and to keep her away from Leighton? She had always seemed so kindly disposed towards the girl, and since their engagement had warmly seconded his plan of finding her, and bringing her home. Once he thought to speak to Georgie herself on the subject, but generously refrained from doing so, lest she should be pained by knowing there was any one who was not pleased with the prospect of her being his wife. But Georgie, who was not over-scrupulous with regard to other people’s property, found the letter on the library table where he had left it, and unhesitatingly read it through; and then, that same afternoon, took occasion, in Edna’s presence, to ask Roy if he had heard from his sister yet, and expressing herself as so sorry that they could not find where she was. She would go herself, and beg her to come home and be happy with them all.

“Poor little creature, so young and so childlike as she seemed when I saw her before,” she said, flashing her great eyes first upon Roy and then upon Miss Overton. “And so shy, too, of strangers. Why, I almost fancied that she was afraid of me, she was so timid and reserved; and possibly she was, for in my excitement I might have been a little brusque in my manner.”

“I do not remember asking if you urged her to come here at that time,” Roy said, thinking of Miss Pepper’s letter; while Georgie, thinking of it too, replied without the least hesitation:

“Certainly, I did. I said all I could consistently say, but she was too ill to undertake the journey, she said, and then she had a nervous dread of meeting Charlie’s friends. I’ve since thought it possible that she was too much stunned and bewildered to know exactly what was said to her, or what we meant by saying it.”

Georgie had made her explanation, and effectually removed from Roy’s mind any unpleasant impression which Aunt Letty’s letter might have left upon it. And she was satisfied. It did not matter much what Edna thought of her, though that little ruse about her being stunned and bewildered was partly for her benefit. Still Georgie could not then meet the wondering gaze of the brown eyes fixed so curiously upon her, and she affected to be very much interested and occupied with a cap she was finishing for Mrs. Churchill, and did not once look at Edna, who managed to escape from the room as soon as possible, and who out in the yard had recourse to her old trick of digging her heels into the gravel by way of relieving her feelings.

Roy made one effort more to win over Miss Pepper, but with such poor success that he gave the matter up for a time, and devoted himself to trying to get up a passion for his betrothed equal to that she felt for him, and to studying and enjoying Miss Overton, who became each day more bewildering and enjoyable for him, while to Mrs. Churchill she became more and more necessary, until both wondered how they had ever existed without her.

(To be continued.)

THE DEFENCE OF THE THAMES.—It is said that Shooter’s Hill is to be placed in a position of defence and offence to any marauding voyagers up the Thames. A plan to surmount the apex of the hill was made out by the military engineers some years since owing to the utterly defenceless state of Woolwich Arsenal, which is commanded by it. The opportunity for the use of the Moncrieff gun system is to be considered. There are some formidable guns lying innocently enough in a most useless place west of the barracks, but an opponent might come east!

THE LONDON READER AND LIFE AND FASHION.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ANNIE's handwriting is very fair.
S. H.—The lines are declined with thanks.
ASPIRO.—The handwriting is bold, distinct, and plain.
H. B. H.—The handwriting is distinct, and quite good enough.
LINA.—Your lines are very pretty, but they are scarcely suitable for us.
J. S. P.—We have not been able to discover the tale to which the verses belong.
AMY.—Princess Mary of England, sister to the Duke of Cambridge, was married to Prince Teck in June, 1869.
ONE OF MANY IRISH READERS.—The former communication to which you allude did not reach us. We regret that the delinquent did not quite accord with your ideas.
J. O. Y.—It is not within our province to publish the addresses of private individuals. You can obtain the information you require by consulting the Court Guide.
AMY.—If you refer back to No. 7 of LIFE AND FASHION you will find a very handsome design in Berlin wool for a border, and in No. 9 a pattern for a slipper.
LILLIAN.—In Nos. 5 and 6 of LIFE AND FASHION are given full particulars how to work the gold and silver embroidery, and the implements can be had at our office.
LITTLE MARY.—In Nos. 11 and 12 of LIFE AND FASHION we have given a very pretty pattern in netting, called the lozenge netting, and we are sure it will please "Little Mary."
J. G. (Bristol).—We regret that you have had so much trouble. Our journal does not contain the article you require. It was, therefore, impossible for us to comply with your request.
LETTY.—Take a small dose of infusion of rose-leaves two or three times a week. Externally, bathe the body every morning in cold water. To the hands apply glycerine at night.
MINNIE.—In our early numbers of LIFE AND FASHION we have given a great quantity of patterns in guipure; see Nos. 2, 3, 4; and in No. 9 a very handsome border for a handkerchief.
F. S.—There is a book called the "Rules of Rhyme," published by Messrs. Hogg, which would prove serviceable to you in your attempt at poetical composition. You should also read the poems of Cowper and Wordsworth.
H. W.—A Mahometan is permitted by the laws of his religion to have four legitimate wives, but as he is also required to keep them, it is only the wealthy who undertake such onerous duties.
S. S.—We cannot put our hands upon the precise receipt to which you refer. Such a liquid, however, can be made by a mixture of three parts copper and one part zinc, dissolved by potash, and boiled in linseed oil and gum.
MAUDE C.—Apply spirits of turpentine to the spots with a clean flannel, and rub them well; or if the material be silk, cover the marks with brown paper, and then apply a flat iron hot enough to scorch the paper.
T. S.—We were always very pleased to receive your friend's effusions. It was far from our intention to say anything that could be deemed harsh. If he will favour us again, we will endeavour to be more explicit.
J. H. O.—Your only resource is to state your case in a respectful letter to the individual's master, having first given your debtor notice of your intention. The servant of a foreign ambassador cannot be arrested, nor can his goods be taken in execution.
EDNA BROWNING.—The inconvenience is possibly occasioned by some slight disarrangement of the digestive organs. But under the circumstances, to which you allude, it would be imprudent for a stranger to advise. You should consult your usual medical attendant.
ALICE L.—Pure mushroom ketchup cannot be preserved for any length of time, because the spices or spirit which might be added to make it keep would destroy the purity of the flavour to which you refer.
J. R. B.—My laundress boils a bunch of peach leaves with her clothes to whiten them. Is it an idea, or is there any chemical action produced? The clothes are certainly very white when they come from her hands.
A NEW READER.—You should send us the name of the lady whom you select, accompanied with particulars of your age, appearance, disposition, and any other qualifications desirable to be known. Forward also your address.

EULALIE.—1. The salary is very small, about 10l. or 15l. per annum. The engagements are usually made by the organist. 2. The handwriting and style of composition are both very good. 3. A pretty brown is the colour of the hair. 4. Our faith in the cosmetic is exceedingly minute.

A SUFFERER.—1. Take a compound rhubarb pill twice a week. 2. All the back numbers of the LONDON READER are on sale at the office. 3. The perch is angled for with a worm or a minnow. In fishing near the bottom, the bait should frequently be raised nearly to the surface, and then allowed gently to sink again.

LOUISA.—The term count is not used in England as a title of honour, but the wives of earls are always addressed as countesses. The title earl is of very great antiquity, dating as far back as the Saxon period of our history. If Her Majesty addresses any commission to an earl she styles him her "trustworthy and well-beloved cousin."

J. H.—It is desirable that you should leave off smoking for a time. Let your diet be simple, but plentiful, and your hours in bed few; they should not exceed seven. To this regimen add plenty of out-door exercise, and cheerful companionship. Then all will soon be well, provided your contrition be sincere, and your resolution firm.

S. O. J.—Yes. Religious dramas have been performed in England similar to those which you refer to as having been recently performed on the Continent. The town of Coventry in the fifteenth century was very remarkable for these exhibitions. They were performed on moveable street-stages, by the Gray Friars, on the day of Corpus Christi. The subjects were the Nativity, Crucifixion, and Doomsday.

E. C. G.—The treatment of the cough must be modified according to the causes from which it proceeds; it may arise from cold, or inflammation of the air tubes, or from diseased lungs; it proceeds sometimes from simple nervousness, or from a disordered stomach. We must, therefore, refer you to a physician for a prescription.

THREE REASONS.

"A cup for hope!" she said,
In the spring-time ere the bloom was old,
The crimson wine was poor and cold,
By her mouth's richer red.

"A cup for love!" how low,
How soft the words; and all the while
Her blush was rippling with a smile,
Like Summer after snow.

"A cup for memory!"
Cold cup that one must drain alone;
While Autumn winds are up and moan
Across the barren sea.

Hope, memory, love;
Hope for fair morn, and love for day,
And memory for the evening gray,
And solitary dove.

C. G. R.

AN EXQUISITE.—A midshipman gets his appointment in the Navy through the nomination of a captain. Private influence is therefore necessary. In these days also boys should have received a suitable education. They usually go into the Naval College, and get their appointments after examination. The expense of an outfit might not exceed fifty pounds.

A YOUNG ARTIST.—Crayons are made from a species of earth which is soft in the ground and hardens on exposure to the air; or they are composed of earths rolled into sticks with some tenacious stuff such as milk or bear work. Softness and delicacy are often attainable in finished crayon drawings, but as compared with oil paintings they lack depth, richness, and truth of colour. For portraits crayons are a useful material.

F. C. H.—The difficulties are probably too great for you to overcome. If you can speak the language fluently, and are young and strong, you might stand a chance by proceeding to Berlin. There is no Prussian recruiting depot in England. The very few Englishmen who are spoken of as fighting in the Prussian army joined it most likely through private influence.

A YOUNG COWMAN.—We are afraid you must depend upon your own judgment, aided by such advice as you can get from your friends and neighbours. We may, however, observe that it seems to be the general opinion that a cow is unprofitable when she reaches twelve years of age. She should then be sold, and a young one purchased. A prudent cottager would, every year, put into a post-office savings' bank a portion of the money he received for the cow's produce, in order, when the time came, to provide himself with the difference between the value of the old cow and the young one.

T. G. (Sydenham).—As a race the Japanese are said to be inferior to the Europeans in physical strength. Travellers speak highly of the character of the Japanese, and describe them as frank and manly. In Japan indigence and pauperism are said to be almost unknown. The Japanese ladies are very musical, most of them play upon a species of guitar. They enjoy almost as much liberty as the ladies of Europe.

MARY ANN.—It is a cardinal principle amongst medical men that the enjoyment of good health depends in some measure upon the free action of the skin. Now if this action be interfered with by the use of powders, cosmetics, and enamels, they must be injurious to the extent of the obstruction they produce. But some of these preparations are, in addition, actively prejudicial. Scientific analysts demonstrate that many of them contain lead in large quantities, the action of which substance is highly dangerous.

GEORGE H.—You must be guided by your own observation of the circumstances. When a sow has ten or twelve pigs at a litter, and two litters in the year, one in spring and another in autumn, she is too valuable to be killed, and ought to be kept as long as she will breed. But if her progeny is small, or if she eats her young or any of them, she should be spayed immediately, preparatory to being fattened and sent to the butcher.

K. H.—The system of caste still prevails among the

Hindoo, although its rigidity has been, perhaps, virtually lessened by the intercourse with Europeans. With regard to marriage, a Brahmin has been always allowed to select a wife from any of the four castes. Though such marriages are legal, the offspring cannot be admitted into the caste of either of their parents. Elaborate provisions exist as to the particular duties which the offspring of these mixed marriages should undertake.

N. I. A.—The facetiousness is amusing, but, on reflection, you will probably consider it out of place. It does not accord with the mode of thought prevalent in the present day. Amongst those Eastern tribes are many men of great intellectual attainments, and imbued with moral principles of great purity. Of course we are at issue with them upon many serious points, but a sect will command respect even from its opponents when in its code it enunciates the duty of truth, honesty, liberality, gentleness, and piety.

U. S. T.'s communication cannot be inserted.

H. B. H.'s description is still imperfect. His age and the qualities he looks for in a wife have been omitted.

LIVY, tall, dark hair and eyes, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall, loving, and fond of home.

EVERING STAR, eighteen, tall, fair, and affectionate. Respondent must be tall, dark, between twenty and twenty-three, and have a little money.

KITTY, nineteen, medium height, a publican's daughter, dark blue eyes, fair complexion, and good features. Respondent should be a mechanic, or in business.

NELLIE, twenty-one, a brunette, an orphan, cheerful, loving, and domesticated. Respondent must be a respectable mechanic.

GRACE, seventeen, middle height, gray eyes, fair complexion, and affectionate. Respondent must be dark, and fond of home.

AN IRISH LASS, 5ft. 9in., dark hair and eyes. Respondent must be tall, affectionate, and good tempered; an Irishman preferred.

A. C. W., twenty-seven, tall, fair complexion, blue eyes, dark brown hair, in a good and responsible position, with a good income. Respondent must be from twenty to twenty-five, good, loving, fond of home and music, and possessed of some means.

LOTTIE, seventeen, 5ft. 3in., dark eyes, hair, and complexion, amiable, plays the piano, and is fond of music and dancing. Respondent must be rather tall, nice looking, with a slight moustache, good tempered, and steady; a young man of the day not objected to.

KATE, seventeen, 5ft. 2in., stentish, fair, with a healthy complexion. Respondent must not exceed twenty-four, he must be tall, dark, have a slight moustache, and not be a swell of the period. A mate of a vessel preferred.

BLUSHING ROSE AND VIOLET.—"Blushing Rose," nineteen, medium height, light brown hair, blue eyes, domesticated, loving, and fond of home; a sailor in the Royal Navy preferred. "Violet," seventeen, dark brown hair, blue eyes, affectionate, and fond of home; one in the army preferred.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

SWEETESTER by—"Beaumont," a Catholic, dark, fond of music, and in a good position.

JENNIE by—"J. C. B.," twenty-two, 5ft. 3in., dark hair, hazel eyes, rosy complexion, and is in the Navy.

OSMUND by—"Eliza Annie," seventeen, black hair, dark brown eyes, good looking, and fond of home.

BLANCHE by—"C. A. A.," tall, dark hair, blue eyes, and affectionate.

J. A. H. by—"Kitty," twenty-seven, tall, dark, loving, nice looking, and ladylike.

IVY by—"E. W. J.," twenty-four, 5ft. 7in., dark, has a loving heart, and a moderate income; would be glad to know Ivy's address.

A. A. by—"Ethel," eighteen, tall, fair, of a good family, and has good prospects.

EMMY wishes to hear from "Rob Roy," with an appointment.

MADGE will be glad if "Jack Dips" will send his address.

LIZZIE and EMILY have sent their addresses for "William and James."

FATTA B. would be glad if "C. T." would make an appointment.

J. O. B.—You have not been sufficiently explicit. If you read the announcements, you will discover the particulars which it is necessary you should forward.

C. C. by—"Black Rose," nineteen, medium height, dark, loving, and fond of home; and—"Blue-eyed Bess," nineteen; would be glad to exchange cards.

TOPPIL SHIRT BLOCKS by—"M. B.," tall, dark, and good tempered.

MAUD EDITH V. by—"Charles," twenty-three, tall, dark, a railway clerk, and a good fellow; and—"Reginald O.," dark, medium height, of good family, and well educated; wishes for Maud's cards, with an address.

BLANCHE by—"Charles M.," twenty-four, tall, dark, loving, good looking, with an income of 200l. per annum;—"Leo," an engine builder, nineteen, 5ft. 6in., dark hair, dark blue eyes, well educated, and affectionate; and—"X. Y. Z.," twenty-six, 5ft. 5in., a tradesman with a yearly income of 400l., very dark complexion, and a good musician.

* * * Now Ready, VOL. XIV. of THE LONDON READER, Price 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. XIV. Price ONE PENNY.

NOTICE.—Part 89, for OCTOBER, Now Ready, price 7d., containing Steel-Plate Engraving, coloured by hand, of the latest Paris Fashions, with large Supplement Sheet of the Fashions for October.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

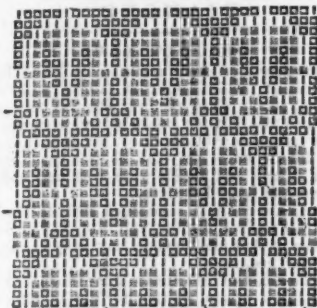
†† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

CUSHION PATTERNS, KNITTED LACE, KERCHIEF COLLAR, SLEEVE, &c., &c.

PATTERNS FOR CUSHIONS, BAGS, &c., &c.

Nos. 1 & 2.

PATTERNS in any shade may be easily worked



PATTERN FOR CUSHIONS, BAGS, ETC., IN
WOOL WORK.—No. 1.

■ Dark Green. ■ Second Green. ■ Third Green.

for various small articles of ornamental furniture, or
for shoes, reticules, etc., etc.

KNITTED LACE.—No. 3.

ABBREVIATIONS.—R right,
l left, st stitch.

This lace may be made avail-
able for handkerchiefs or under
garments, in fine thread, and for
pillow-cases, sheets, and cur-
tains in coarser material. If
worked of the size of the illus-
tration, it should be applied to
sheets, etc.

In the first place, let the knit-
ting be worked on to the sheet
or other article. At the com-
mencement of the row, wind
round the needle and add a
stitch, bearing in mind that the
work is fastened to the linen;
let it be widened in a slanting
direction; the width as in illus-
tration.

1st row.—To the r.

2nd row.—L.

3rd row.—Drop a st, *, wind
twice, knit 3 st together. Re-
peat from sign *.

4th row.—L, knit 2 st from
those wound round the needles.

5th and 6th rows.—Like 1
and 2.

7th row.—*, wind 1 r. Repeat
twice from *. Then diminish 4



KERCHIEF-COLLAR.—No. 4.

times, *, wind 1 right. Repeat twice from last *, then
repeat from the 1st.

8th row.—L.

9th row.—L. Then execute the open work be-

tween each repetition and wind again, before dimi-
nishing as in illustration and row 7.

10th row.—L.

11th row.—Like the 7th, and so on till the pattern
is worked 6 times; but before the 6th time, complete
two plain rows. Then execute loose chain-stitch,
taking the thread double.

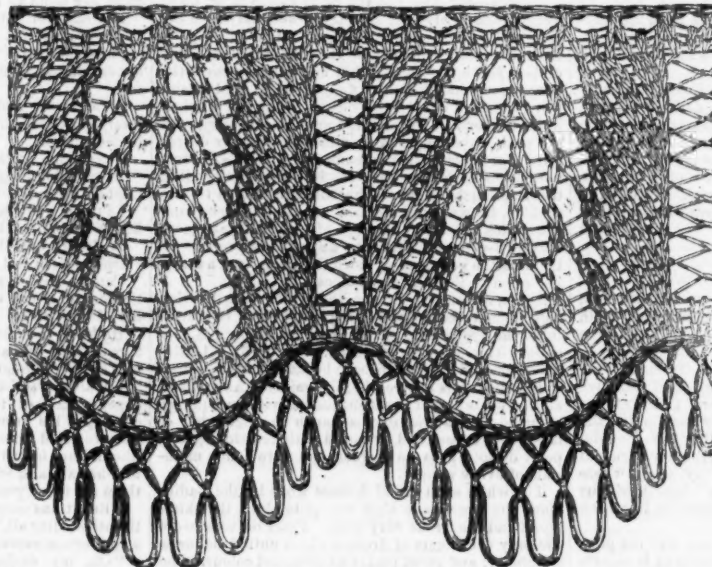
Where any square article has to be trimmed all
round with this lace in netting, let the outer edge be
accomplished with double thread, as shown in the pat-
tern.

KERCHIEF-COLLAR & SLEEVE.—Nos. 4 & 5.

ILLUSTRATION 4 gives our fair readers a specimen
of the shawl-pattern collar, partaking also of the
form of the kerchief-collar. It is of plain net, em-
broidered in *appliqué* and trimmed with Valenciennes.
The slope of the neck is trimmed round with lace pre-
ceded by embroidery, while the sleeves are marked
by rich net puffing, and are trimmed like the collar.

SUITS.

THE long casaque and single skirt will be widely
adopted for costumes, no matter what novelties mo-
dists may bring home from Paris. These draped
over dresses are so simple of construction, so grace-
ful, and so convenient, that they will retain their
hold on popular favour. There is also a desire to do
away with the many furbelows and flounces so much
worn at present, and we shall probably see a return
to simpler trimmings, such as folds and bias bands of
the dress material, of silk and of velvet, with much



KNITTED LACE.—No. 3.

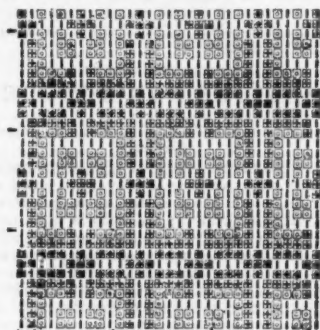
lace, fringe, and, perhaps, embroidery. Short pa-
letots and upper skirts, of very simple construction,
will also remain in favour.

Cashmere will be the first choice in woollen goods.
Black cashmere will be most worn, and in this case
the entire suit will be cashmere, but we shall also see
brown and gray cashmere casaques or habits, draped
over silk skirts of the same or a darker shade. Gui-
pure lace and insertion, heavy corded silk and fringe,
will be the trimming.

Black cashmere paletots, lined with soft sarconet
silk, will be the extra wraps for the street during the
season. They should be partly fitted to the figure
by a seam down the middle of the back, and should
have flowing sleeves, or else sabots. A very hand-
some paletot of cashmere is lustreless black, trimmed
with Valenciennes lace, under a scant frill of black
tulle, with a heading of black and white passemen-
terie. The trimming extends up the centre of the
back to the neck. A ruche of the lace is placed
standing around the neck, and dispenses with the use
of a collar.

The Scotch shawl costume will be much worn this
season. They are graceful costumes, serviceable for
travelling and for morning shopping, and are not ex-
pensive, a single long shawl being enough to make
a casaque, or an over-skirt with a paletot, and the
fringe on the edges answers for trimming. Steel
gray, mixed grays, and dark browns are most used;
but inch-wide stripes of black and white, and the
blue and green Sutherland plaids, are also being
made into costumes.

Side-laced boots are being restored to favour for
the promenade. These give a neater fit than can
ever be obtained in buttoned boots. The newest house
shoes, that threaten to supersede the Marie Autoi-
nette slipper, are low buskins, covering only the in-
step, and half low behind. They are laced in front,



PATTERN FOR CUSHIONS, BAGS, ETC., IN
WOOL WORK.—No. 2.

■ Dark Havannah. ■ Second Havannah. ■ Third
Havannah. ■ Fourth Havannah.

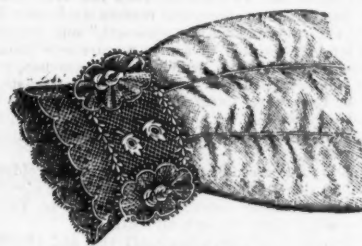
or else fastened on the side by a few buttons. These
are called the Empress shoe, and are made of French
kid, with white fan stitching.

At the few marriages that oc-
cur before the wedding season
begins there is a tendency to do
away with attendants, and with
elaborate dressing and much ce-
remony. The bride appears in
her travelling dress of lawn co-
loured silk, and the groom in a
semi-dress costume. Even on
more ceremonious occasions
plainer dressing is adopted. For
instance, trains of white silk
dresses measure but sixty in-
ches, and the corsage is almost
invariably high, with pointed
neck and sabot sleeves. Cham-
bréry gauze, crêpe de Chine,
grenadine, and muslins are the
materials used when silk is ob-
jected to.

SILKS.

AMONGST colours in silks,
grays are in great variety. First
are the dove-colours—turtle-
dove gray, with softer cast and
more tinged with pink than the
shade worn in the spring; ra-
mier, or ring-dove, is in two
fuller shades than the last—one
light, the other dark. Sardinian
gray is a bright, silvery hue;
the Russian gray has more blue
in it; and the French is the

warm, clear shade so popular two years ago. Alliga-
tor gray is an ugly mud-colour that knowing ones
predict will be considered stylish when the season
for displaying it arrives. Among the mode colours
is one called absinthe, a green-tinted gray, like worn-
wood; another is porphyry, a pale stone-colour. Java
represents the palest coffee berry, and cacao is a



SLEEVE.—No. 5.

swarthy dun-colour, like the lining of a cocoa nut.
Of two or three shades of bronze the green-tinged,
like verd-antique, is the newest.

Greens and blues approach each other too closely
to be defined either by eye or pen. Ocean-colour, a
novelty, appeared blue to the writer and green to her
neighbour. Of blues, pure and simple, the dark ma-
rine colours are again offered for favour.

The newest red silks are rich glowing wine-colours, with more of crimson than of fiery scarlet, notwithstanding their baptism of Mephistopheles, dragon, and *feu*. Grenat, the colour of a rich, glowing garnet, nacarat, sultane, and corinth, were worn last season. Still darker than these are the rich dahlia shades, and the scabious of mingled purple and maroon. By way of purple variety there is the old-fashioned puce-colour, a clear, distinct shade in favour with our grandmothers.

FASHIONS FOR OCTOBER.

(Description of Steel Plate Engraving published with this part.)

FIRST TOILETTE.—Dress of faye, demi-trained in the upper skirt, which is completely trimmed with a ruche, and with fringe of the same colour as the dress, viz., rich mauve; the body is open in front, displaying a beautiful trimming of Valenciennes. This lace trims the hanging sleeves; these, as well as the front skirt of mauve faye, are finished off with mauve ruches and fringe. On the under-skirt this trimming assumes the shape of two flounces. In the head-dress, the hair is raised and curled in front and richly braided behind; between the curls and the braid is placed a sarcenet bow, matching the dress in colour.

SECOND TOILETTE.—Costume of rich stone-coloured silk. This dress is cut round. It has a jacket, tastefully trimmed with stone-coloured plissé, surmounted by brown ribbon velvet. The upper and under-skirt have a similar trimming, excepting that the upper has no plissé. The sleeves are half tight, reaching to the wrist. The hair is brushed off from the forehead, and made to form rich rolls round the head. The hat, of rice straw, is trimmed with brown silk velvet and full blown roses.

TOILETTE FOR A LITTLE GIRL.—Frock of Chambéry gauze, with satin stripes, is decidedly short. Chemisette and sleeves of mull muslin, trimmed with narrow Honiton lace. Casaque of rose gros de Naples. The corsage à la Benoite. The casaque is trimmed with rose-coloured ruches, four rows of which are placed on the skirt of Chambéry gauze. The hat, of fine brown straw, has in front a wreath of white asters, finished off on the right side with brown and green ribbon.

THE FASHIONS.

WHILE all the horrors of war render magenta, with its sanguine hue, the fashionable colour in many parts of France, and black, deep black, the universal wear among hundreds and thousands of mourners both in France and Germany, we turn to our hitherto peaceful land, and perceive that spite of pity for the losses and trials of our neighbours, we have leisure and inclination for the duties of the toilette, which, according to recent decrees, has become very nearly what the most prudent and sensitive could wish to see it, nay, more, where the best taste prevails among the highest of our gentry and aristocracy, we find moderation in all the details of dress.

As seen by the illustrations we have had the pleasure of furnishing for our readers, the hair is quietly braided, curled, or plaited, giving no hideous top-heaviness to the person. The waist no longer vies with that of the wasp, nor does the skirt assume the proportions of a washerwoman's very large basket.

Among the vulgar attempts at dash in dress, one sees gaudy ribbons and flowers with some admixture of a laughable little hat; all this on piles of artificial and preposterously thick piles of hair; the costume corresponding in absurdity to the head-dress; but we trust that even the very young and inexperienced among our readers would only behold a warning in such a "figurante," and consider her far better suited to act as a scarecrow than a model for the fashions, which are, we are happy to say, in accordance with good sense and good taste.

One remarkable feature in modern dress is the attention given to the "pretinesses" of costume, the delicate habit shirts, manchettes, and lace and ribbon trimmings.

All high dresses should have lace or embroidered muslin collars. Cuffs or manchettes are *de rigueur*, and the favourite materials continue to be Valenciennes and plain net, or mull muslin.

Flounces *plissées* are remarkably neat and pleasing in effect, and where used to trim the skirt the *plissé* reappears on the jacket, upper-skirt, *paletot* or *casaque*. By the way, the *casaque*, in silk for fine weather, or cloth as the ruder season becomes unmistakably nearer, is much in favour with those who dislike the costume as a promenade dress.

Satin and velvet flowers in the fashionable milliners' windows announce the departure of warm weather and sunshine.

Black lace bonnets are best suited for the *demi-*

saison, and we may observe that jet ornaments with these bonnets are becoming, and as jet ornaments are everlasting, they unite the economical with the becoming.

The *souliers de Campagne* should be worn with buckles and heels.

Gloves, with three buttons, are all the more desirable, as the protection of the wrist is rendered necessary by autumnal chills.

And now our fair readers may like a few hints on a topic interesting to all—we mean the bride's costume. Of course the London season, now belonging to the recent past, has caused no small amount of unions, "for better, for worse," but, certainly for better for the mantua-makers and milliners, who pocket so much on these interesting occasions. We can almost imagine their taking every opportunity of watching the gradual progress of flirtations. They might do so partially if they had leisure to note the fashionable equestrians in the park, or the full-dressed beaux and belles in the opera boxes. Love is still active among us, spite of the sway of gold.

For any novelties in bridal costume we cannot now refer to sorrowful Paris. And when we did adopt her fashions we think that our blushing British brides lost much of their poetic charm by adopting the fashions of their livelier and more coquettish neighbours.

In France the bridal veil worn at the back of the head, and never thrown over the face, has more the effect of the lappets we wear at Court than of that chaste covering, *à la religieuse*, which has something so softening, so solemn, and so sacrificial in its graceful and diaphanous folds—we say sacrificial—for does not the bride at the altar, however passionately and devotedly she may love the chosen lord and master of her future life, lay on that altar her girlhood and its gladness, the home of her youth, the joys of her maiden existence, the pursuits she has hitherto delighted in, and if she think and feel deeply and rightly, that self she has hitherto perhaps made predominant, to merge all her pride, love, hopes, and interest in another dearer self? For the one great ceremony of woman's life is it not more suitable to wear the soft shrouding veil of the English bride, through which the silken tresses (golden, brown, or black), the orange blossoms, and the smiles, tears, and blushes of the bride, are more than half-concealed, than to go barefaced to the altar with the veil floating down the back, as at a drawing-room in Buckingham Palace?

Again, we see with pleasure that white satin, that rich and soft material, so fascinating to the touch, so beautiful to the eye, and so becoming to the fair sex, is now almost imperative for the bridal dress. The Ladies Hamilton and other high-born beauties have appeared at the altar thus arrayed in Westminster Abbey, and all the rich brides of Great Britain have in consequence resumed the material once so much in vogue, but of late years superseded by *moiré antique*, white glacé, *pont de soie*, *gros de Naples*, and rare fancy materials of every variety.

The white satin bridal dresses worn by the Ladies Hamilton were made high and quite plain, the skirts gored and the trains very long. Pearl buttons were the only ornaments of dresses which united richness, simplicity, and great purity of form and colour. The exquisite and voluminous bridal veils of the finest lace, thrown over the whole person prevented any appearance of plainness. But many brides (particularly those rather in the summer than the spring of life) prefer having the usual amount of lace, flowers, orange blossoms, and white satin rosettes as a finish to the rich material composing the bridal dress. With regard to the wreath, in almost all cases the diadem form is the most becoming, and that shape prevents the veil from rubbing against the face, and makes it fall in graceful folds in front. The long streamers, or branches and sprays which some florists add at the back of the wreath, only spoil its classic effect, and by constantly rubbing the neck and catching in the veil, are a source of great inconvenience and discomfort. With regard to the costumes of the bridesmaids, they are now very tasteful and becoming. White tulle, talarin, grenadine, or any other light material made in the present dressy fashion, and trimmed with cerise blue or mauve silk or satin (green, however bright and soft the shade, being foolishly considered unlucky at a wedding, being seldom used), set off the pretty bridesmaids, and throw out the pure white of the central figure of the bride.

Tasteful wreaths of ribbons, of the colour chosen to trim the dresses, the sash, etc., etc., and mingled with a little blonde or fine lace, form a graceful festive head-dress for the bridesmaids, and if their gloves and *bottines* match the colour of their head-dresses, the effect is very pleasing. Beautiful bouquets of coloured flowers in the hands of the bridesmaids, contrast well with the exquisite bridal bouquet, which should combine every rare, lovely, and

fragrant blossom of purest white, the orange flower itself being pre-eminent for beauty, significance, and fragrance. The bride's bouquet should be surrounded by white lace, and the bridesmaids' by blonde, streamers of gauze or tulle, and trimmed with pink, of the colour of their head-dresses and trimmings.

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XLVI

It was near the close of a soft day in May. In the best room of the kind-hearted jailer's wife Lady Violet sat supported by pillows; she had been an invalid since that day, ten weeks before, when she was rescued from a terrible death by her lover-husband. She did not know yet that he was her husband, though Miggs and Fiddle were with her, and Sir Jamieson and Lady Lowndes.

Captain Evelyn had summoned them to the bedside of his wasted darling, and they had come on the wings of that fond devotion my lady had such a faculty for inspiring.

All this time the unfortunate guardsman had lain in a Belgian prison, waiting for the investigation into Conway's death, and not knowing which way it might terminate. But he was free at last, and was coming to tell his own story.

He had starved his heart all this time, forbidding the rest to speak, for the sake of telling it himself.

Lady Violet knew only that he had rescued her from a fate the horrors of which she was banishing from her mind as rapidly as possible.

Her dark, bright eyes watched the door nervously, her delicate cheek flushed at every sound. Miggs sat near, her little thin hands clasped tightly on her knees, almost as much excited as Lady Violet herself.

Sir Jamieson and Lady Lowndes were with Captain Evelyn, waiting for the necessary legal formula to be terminated.

They came at last.

Dear, thoughtful Miggs vanished at one door as Captain Evelyn entered at the other alone.

In the next room little Miggs went down on her knees, sobbing all by herself with joy and excitement. Waiting outside, Sir Jamieson and Eleanor clasped hands and laughed and cried together.

Captain Evelyn entered the dim little parlour, with the look of a man to whom the supreme moment of his life has come.

He knew that the life he worshipped had hung by a thread for weeks, and the last words of Lady Lowndes had been, "She must not be agitated."

But all his self-control vanished at the first fond, eager glance of those passionate eyes. He could only open his arms, and let the white, angelic form that tottered forward to meet him melt into them. She did not faint this time, and holding her thus he told her all, and what a slender wall had separated them all these years.

"But it has only tried us, and proved us each to the other, after all," said my lady, lifting her face with a quivering, rapturous smile.

"Oh, my darling! my own! my wife, at last!" murmured the soldier, his voice choked with happiness.

The others were summoned presently.

Eleanor fell on her knees at Lady Violet's side.

"I have never asked you to forgive me all the wrong I did you," she said, earnestly and humbly. "I waited for this intercessor in your heart!" and looked at Captain Evelyn.

Some inflection of her voice struck him with remembrance.

"It was you," he cried, "dressed in boy's clothes?" Eleanor blushed.

"What is that?" asked Lady Violet.

Eleanor and he exchanged glances. Not for the world must that unhappy man's name be mentioned here.

"She saved my life once. Don't ask me to tell you the particulars now, my darling," he said, with a fond, earnest look into Lady Violet's wondering eyes. My lady bent, in her royal way, and put a palm each side Eleanor's face.

"Dear friend," she said, "could I measure all the debt I owe you with so ungrateful a word as forgiveness?"

Not till long after did Lady Violet know that it was Eleanor, disguised as a boy, who had warned her husband of the presence of that lurking assassin—the *fine man*—in his bed-chamber.

Thus disguised, Eleanor had stealthily watched Conway from the night she met him so unexpectedly at the London terminus.

They were married over again—Lady Violet and her faithful hero—to save giving publicity to their

strange story; partly, perhaps, too, for the sake of blessing their union with a ceremony whose solemnity should contain no reminder of the evil genius of their two lives.

No one, not even her husband, ever questioned Lady Violet of the events of those terrible weeks in the tower of Drumencette. What they were, might be gathered partly from the terrible prostration of her nervous and physical system, from which she did not recover entirely for years.

Her husband could scarcely bear to have her out of his sight, lest some evil fate should again snatch her from him. They had such happiness in each other as seldom falls to the lot of humanity.

Three months after their return to Eaglescliffe there was a quiet wedding party gathered in the great saloon of the Cliffe drawing-rooms. The bride, whose pale, soft eyes shone out from a cloud of lace, that might have veiled a grand duchess fitly, was our dear, faithful, patient little Miggs; and the happy, bashful, ecstatic masculine creature upon whose arm she leaned was called Merkes.

Lady Violet loaded the happy pair with gifts; but she gave little Miggs nothing that was so precious in her sight as the tears she shed on her beloved shoulder at parting.

Sir Jamieson and Lady Lowndes were chief among the guests, with Lord Evelyn and the countess, and Sir Jasper Townley, with Miss Bell Warleigh, now his betrothed wife. The toilettes on this occasion were beyond description.

Not until the following season did Lady Violet dawn in the magnificence of her beauty upon that London society whose queen she forthwith became, creating such a sensation in fashionable circles as the oldest Court *habitués* pronounced unequalled.

My lady looked upon all these honours and triumphs but indifferently. Her husband's love was so much more to her, and the Paradise which their mutual affection created was so nearly a perfect one, that the hours of comparative retirement spent at Eaglescliffe, or the beautiful seat in Wales, were dearer to both than all other allurements.

One shadow, perhaps, entered into the peace of my lady's blissful life, one thorn was among all her roses. What it was may be gathered from these words, which she said once to a young girl whom she loved very dearly, and whom she suspected of an attachment to one of whom her parents did not approve:

"Wait till you are a gray-haired old woman, dear child," she said, solemnly, "sooner than marry without a parent's blessing. For, oh! there is no pain so lasting, no remorse so keen, as that which follows deliberate and wilful disregard of the wishes of those to whom Heaven has ordained that our first earthly love and obedience are due."

The Black Diamond my lady insisted upon returning to its rightful owners, the descendants of Sir Jasper Townley.

At that second marriage ceremony between herself and Captain Evelyn she was wedded with a ring of virgin gold.

THE END.

FACETIÆ.

NEY!—Every French soldier carries, we are told, figuratively, a field-marshal's baton in his knapsack. Surely this cannot mean that the gallant fellow is F.M. innate.—*Period.*

DULL TIMES.

Editor of *Humorous Journal*: "I say, you know, hang it all, Mr. Glowworm, we pay you to do something comic, and if you take our money you ought to be comic, you know, or it's a swindle."—*Judy.*

COMPENSATION.

Irate Old Gentleman (who has been waiting twenty minutes): "Look here, porter, do you call this a fast train?"

Porter: "Yes, sir!"

"Stuck fast! I should say," said the old gentleman, and chuckled for the next half-hour.—*Judy.*

LARKS.

(Extract from a *Swell's Journal* at Teddington.)

Such fun, taking out two Jolly Girls for a row and letting them do it themselves, you know. Girls with plenty of fun in them, and all that sort of thing, you know, who splash you all over by their confounded clumsiness, and you have to pretend you don't mind your clothes being spoiled, you know, and all that sort of thing.—*Judy.*

NOT THE CHEESE.—One of the French satirical papers contains a picture representing a large mousetrap, labelled "France," into which a troop of mice, dressed as Prussians, are entering—all watchfully regarding a piece of cheese tickled "Paris." The notion is ingenious, and, as war-songs are the order of the day, it might be used as an illustration of "The Watch by the Rhin(d)."—*Judy.*

THE BUTTERFLY HUNTER.—Mr. Editor.—These hounds (the well-known street boys) had such an extraordinary run the other day that I think it is worthy of being chronicled in your columns. The meet was in Fleet Street, about sixty miles from Oxford. The Butterfly, a white one, was let out from the Temple gardens. After a clipping chase of two minutes, a policeman stopped the pursuit. A *détour* being thus forced on us, we temporarily lost sight of the bird of prey; but a sharp turn to the left brought us into Chancery Lane, where a cap judiciously shied, brought down the crafty animal and—a window pane at the same time.—*CHASSEUR.*—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.*

PROH, FUDOR.

Here is a case of lunacy, or something worse, from a morning newspaper:

MONEX.—A Gentleman is willing to make Advances to respectable persons, male or female, in town or country, on their own security.—Apply, personally, or by letter, to, etc.

That the gentleman should be willing to made advances is not surprising, for it is more than likely that a forward movement towards making his acquaintance will not originate from anybody else. His advertisement should have been headed "Matrimony," and not "Money," evidently. But then the exes? No, he must have been posted in the Sheriff's Court and outlawed from society, or he is a hopeless lunatic.—*Will-o'-the-Wisp.*

THE FREAKS OF CUPID.

SWEET Cupid is an arrant thief;

I saw him sailing down the river,

Upon a snow-white lily leaf,

With dart and arrow, bow and quiver.

On either side, along the shore,

Were maidens radiant of beauty.

They praised the shining wings he wore,

And said that love was "linked with duty."

Ah, then he raised his silver bow—

'Twas loaded with a golden arrow—

And then the warm red blood did flow,

Where strayed the milk-white dove and spar-row.

His target was a tender heart,

'Twas in a lover's bosom beating;

He twanged his bow, he plunged his dart

Where bliss and sorrow kissed at meeting.

Oh, tell me not that Love is blind;

He looks through lids which rapture closes;

For eyes and hair of black, he'll find

Ringlets of gold and cheeks of roses.

The dimples upon cheek and chin

Are scars made by sweet Cupid's lances,

And wounds where arrows entered in,

When half-shut eyes shot secret glances.

When bosoms heave with tender sighs,

And hearts, half-sad, seem heavy-laden,

Cupid, full armed, in ambush lies,

And he will wound some man or maiden.

G. W. B.

GEMS.

As much as you excel others in fortune, so much ought you to excel them in virtue.

ALWAYS take the part of an absent person who is censured in company, so far as truth and propriety will allow.

He who swears shows that he distrusts his own word, and thinks others will do so, if he does not confirm it with an oath.

SIMPLICITY and modesty are among the most engaging qualities of every superior mind.

The road ambition travels is too narrow for friendship, too crooked for love, too rugged for honesty, and too dark for science.

If you have been once in company with an idle person, it is enough. You need never go again. You have heard all he knows. And he has had no opportunity of learning anything new—for idle people make no improvements.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

TRACING PAPER.—A good tracing paper may be made by mixing, with the aid of gentle heat, an ounce of Canada balsam and a quarter of a pint of spirits of turpentine. Wash one side of the paper with this mixture. The black carbonic papers are made by being "painted" with a composition consisting of 2oz. of tallow, 1oz. powdered black lead, 1 pint of linseed oil, and sufficient lampblack to make it of the consistency of cream. These should be melted together and rubbed on the paper whilst hot. When perfectly dry they will be fit for use.

NEW SALADS.—It is a pity people in this country

neglect to add to their diet by a more liberal use of harmless salad herbs which are now altogether wasted. Watercress is very well in its way, but is not everywhere accessible. It has lately been pointed out that our sorrel plant is a more delicate and agreeable variety than the wood sorrel so largely used at table in France and Germany; that the common shepherd's purse and lady's smock may supply the place of the watercress; that the famous "barbe des capucins" of the Paris restaurants is nothing more than the blanched shoots of the wild chicory, and that the "salade de chandine" is our own neglected corn-salad. Our peasants, however, have yet to learn the art of making salad, and the wisdom which selects and dices with oil the bitter qualities of such herbs as the endive or its proposed humbler substitutes, the avens, the bladder campion, and the tender shoots of the wild hop. This art must descend to them from a more cultivated class, and in nothing is the English middle-class table more generally deficient, than in the wholesome, varied, and savoury salad, which adds an attraction to the simplest fare, and gives something of freshness, if not of refinement, to the richest as to the poorest table.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE committee of the fund raised for the relief of the sufferers by the late collision in the Channel, in which the *Normanby* went down, has decided that 400l. per annum shall be paid in annuities to the widows for fourteen years. Each orphan, on arriving at the age of 14, to receive 20l., the balance to be divided among the surviving widows.

THE ladies accompanying the Duke of Magenta, and intended by him to do the honours of the camp, are found to be the Duchess of Clermont-Tonnerre and Madame Latour-Dupin. Their baggage was captured, together with that of the Marshal, by 14 Prussian Hussars, who had plenty of fun over the chignons, crinolines, and other articles of ladies' dress, trying them on and disguising themselves as ladies, to the amusement of the German camp.

A RARE fish, called a "puffy," has been caught on the Fife Coast. It was six feet two inches in length, four feet round at the thickest part of the body, and the fatty matter in which it was enveloped was about one inch in thickness. It was furnished with two rows of teeth in each jaw, twenty-three teeth in the lower row, and twenty-four in the upper. It weighed between four and five cwt.

THE RESULT OF APPLICATION.—Seek to acquire the power of continuous application, without which you cannot expect success. If you do this, you will soon be able to perceive the distance which it creates between you and those who have not acquired such a habit. You will not count yourself, nor will they count you as one of them. Thus you will find yourself emerging into the higher regions of intellectual and earnest men; men who are capable of making a place for themselves, instead of standing idly gaping, desiring a place without the power to command it. Keep on striving to accomplish more and more every day, and thus enlarge constantly the range of your intellectual ability. If you learn to do as much work in one day as you used to do in two or three days, you are as good as two or three such men as you formerly were, condensed into one.

THE DEFENCES OF DOVER.—It has been announced that a board of officers has been appointed to inspect the different forts and guns around Dover, and we hear that notwithstanding the importance of the garrison in a military point of view the fortifications have nevertheless been sadly neglected. Dover of itself is a natural fortress, and properly armed might bid defiance to both fleets and armies. We have, however, ascertained that there is not a single gun mounted on any fort in the garrison that could penetrate even a third-rate ironclad. The best gun, mounted in a 7-inch breech-loading Armstrong, only firing shell shots. The next best gun is an old smooth-bore 42-pounder of an obsolete pattern, which was never more than provisionally adopted into the service. The citadel is armed exclusively with 64-pounder Widge guns, also of an obsolete pattern. It is unnecessary to enumerate the guns of a less calibre, as what we have already stated is sufficient to show the state the fortifications around Dover are in. We must, nevertheless, add that there are several other guns of a heavier nature, such as 12-ton and 7-ton guns, but by the orders of a Liberal Government they are unfortunately at the present time lying on skidding at Arrehcliffe Fort and Guildford Battery. Colonel Collinson has returned from his tour of inspection, and now there is a rumour to the effect that it is the intention of the authorities to have these guns mounted; but even supposing it to be true, the batteries could not possibly be prepared for their reception by this side of Christmas.

Annette to her Lover.

[October 1, 1870.]

CHANSONETTE.

The Words from the "Songs of the Conscript."

Music by RAYMOND GUILATI.

VOICER. *Andante.*

Oh! how you dis-tress me, my gay Gren-a-dier, When you
You tell me that bet-ter times sure-ly will come, How

PIANO. *p cres.*

tell me that you must be-gone, And leave your An-nette a prey to despair, Be- rest of all peace, and for-lorn. My
of-ten those words I re-hearse; But till you return to your once happy home, I feel that they cannot be worse; What

espress.

heart with grief I'm sure will break, E'en summer no pleasure can bring Like those when your cares I used to partake, And I
sig-ni-fies honour, or glory, or power? Or ev-en if you were a king? 'Twould give me no joy like that happy hour, When I

Gioioso. dolce.

heard your voice mer-ri-ly sing-..... Tra la la la la la, Tra la la la la, Tra la la la la la,
first heard you mer-ri-ly sing-..... Tra la la la la la, &c.

f *p dolce.*

lento. *ad lib.*

Tra la la la la la, Tra la la la, Tra la la la, Tra la la la la la, Tra la la la.

8va e cres.

colla parte. *f*

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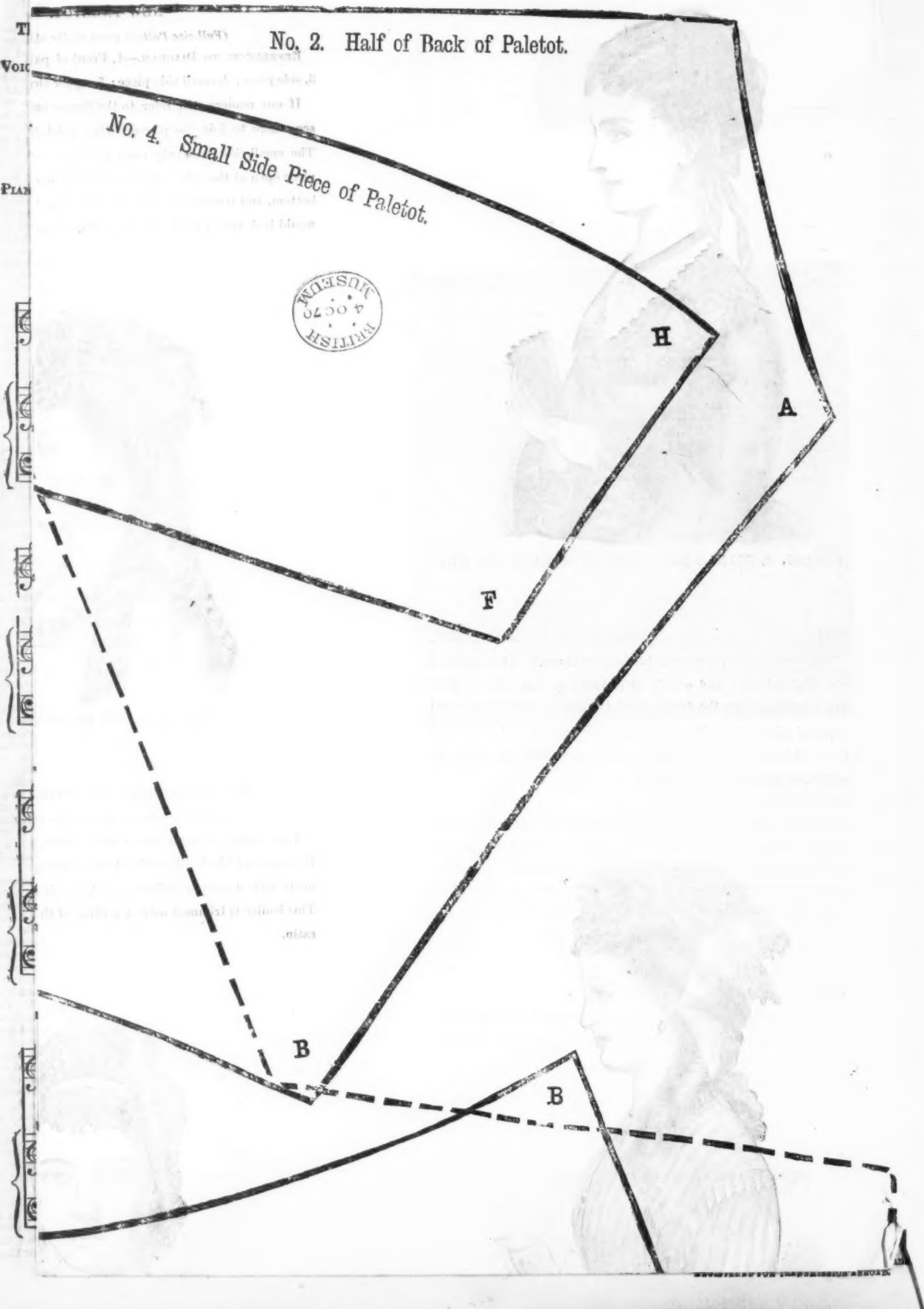
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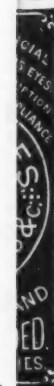
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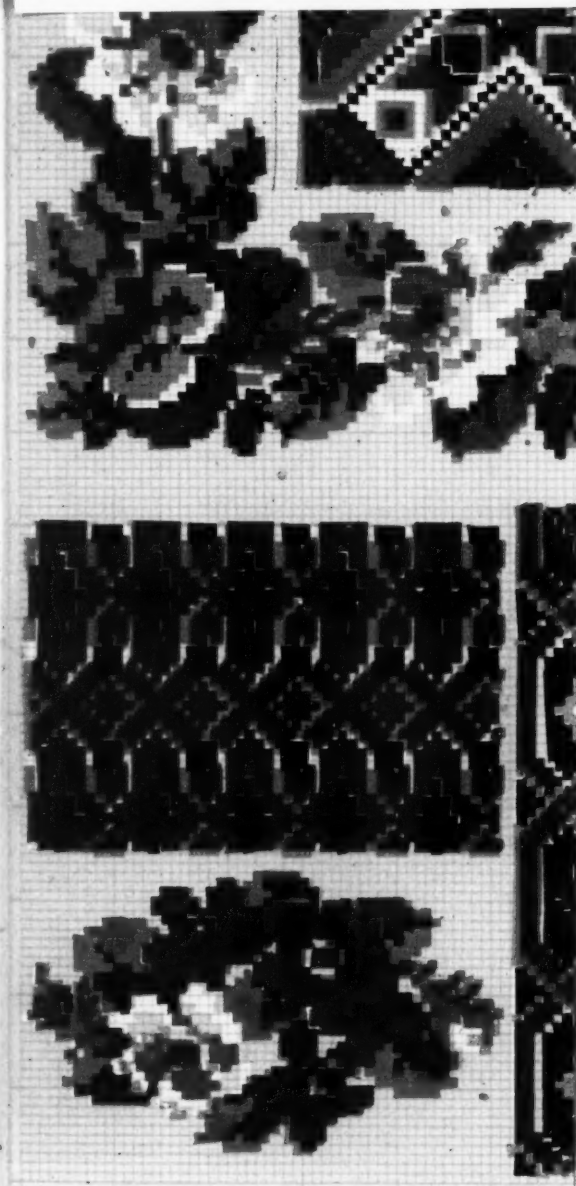
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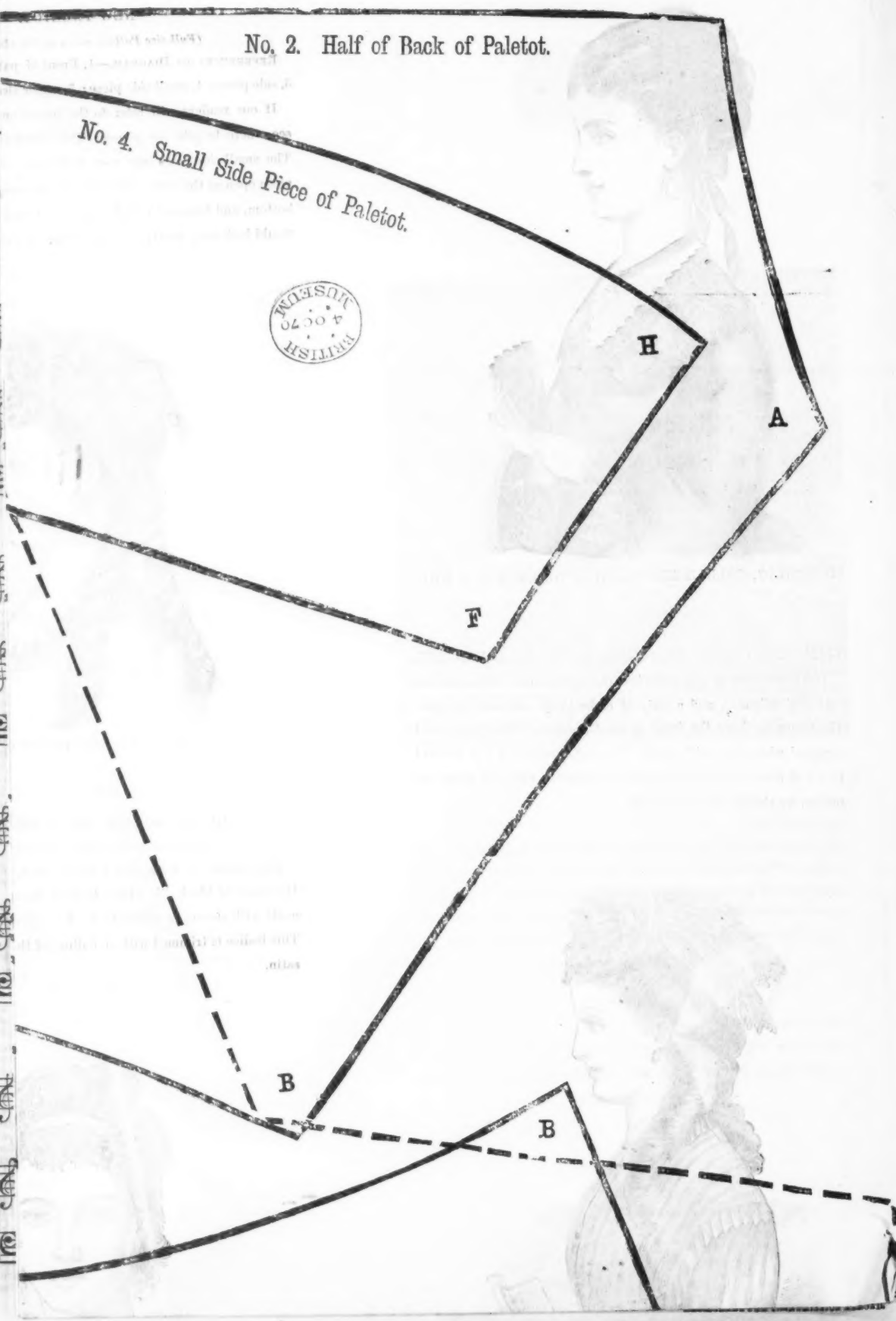
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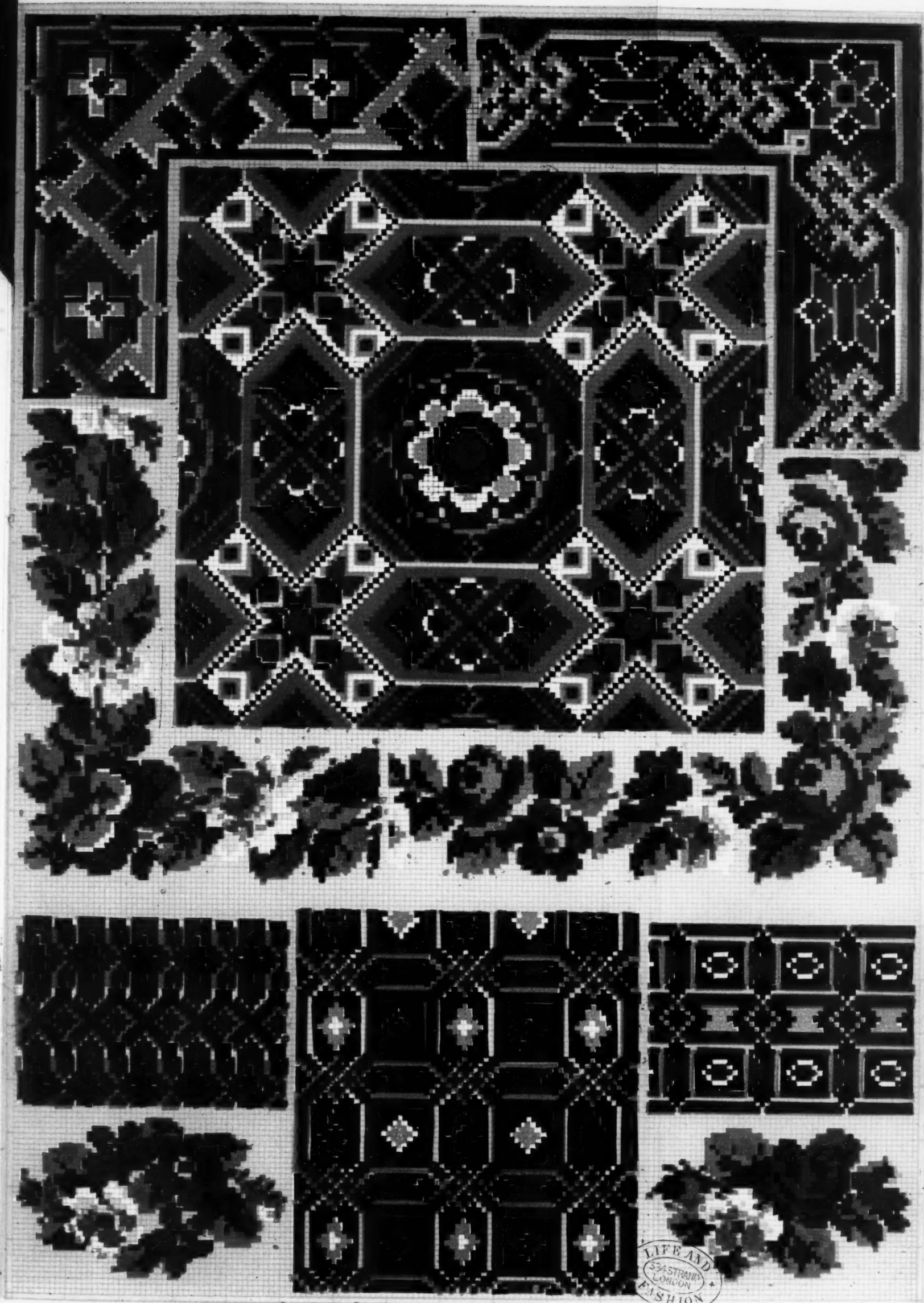
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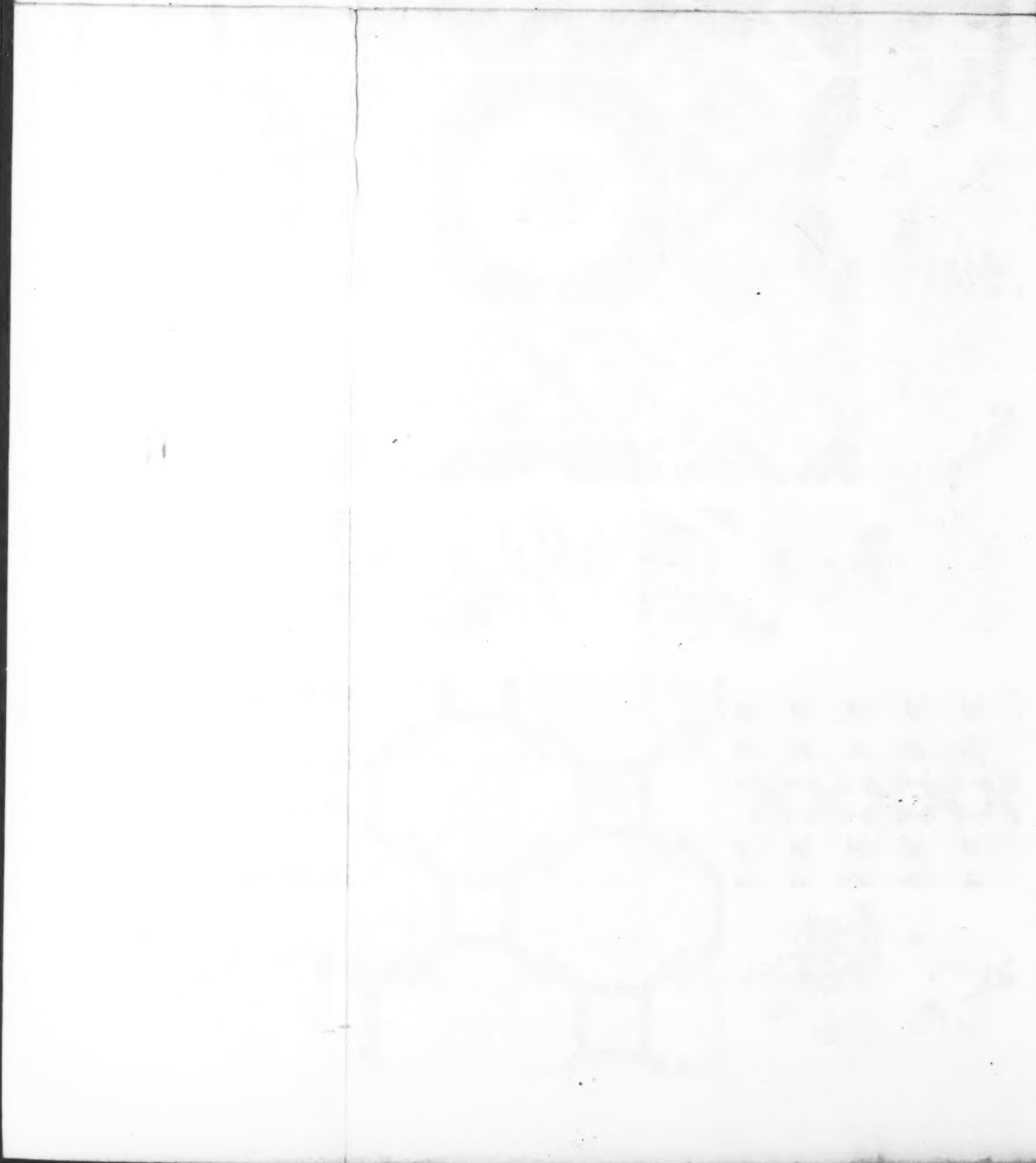
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OCTOBER 1, 1870.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

LONDON READER.

SEVERE COUGHS, COLDS, ASTHMA, and INFLUENZA, are speedily cured by the use of

SPENCER'S PULMONIC ELIXIR,

CAREFULLY
PREPARED FROM THE
RECIPE OF THE
LATE C. SPENCER, ESQ.,
SURGEON, ETC.,
SALFORD,
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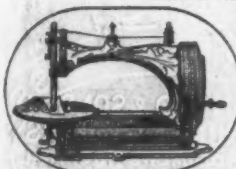
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PART 90, VOL. XV.—NOVEMBER, 1870.

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- MUSIC.—1. Wake, Lady, Wake! Serenade, composed by R. Guylott. 2. The Royal Flower Show; Waltz, composed by E. S. Grenville. 3. To Sing of thy Beauty, dear Maid; Ballad, composed by T. G. Welshford. 4. Twilight; Polka, composed by Frank Lloyd. 5.—How Gently Here! Barcarolle, composed by Raymond Guiliati. [384, STRAND.]

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- MUSIC.—1. The Merry Month of May; Ballad, composed by R. G. Arber. 2. Under the Hawthorn Tree; Polka, composed by G. A. Forde. 3. Be Quick! for I am in Haste! composed by T. J. Walker. 4. The Sun Flower; Waltz, composed by H. V. Lewis. [384, STRAND.]